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The Mountain View. Frontispiece.

"THEIR CHILDREN."

BY

MRS. HENRY STEELE CLARKE,

AUTHOR OF

"MARBLE PREACHER."

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BY WAY OF PREFACE.

THE writer of the following pages desires to say that to neither myth, legend or story, is she indebted for the idea of Antonio's Bronze. Such a statement would seem unnecessary had she not been repeatedly questioned as to the source from which she drew her conception of Lombardo's Temple, as described in "The Marble Preacher."

She claims entire originality for both Temple and Bronze, while freely and gratefully acknowledging her indebtedness to other writers for many thoughts and illustrations used in unfolding the truths these works of art were intended to teach.

The incidents described by Herr Lenz, in his account of his trip to Gottengen, are mainly borrowed, as are, also, the glowing words used by Charles Franse when speaking of autumn scenery in New England, but with these exceptions the merit or otherwise of the book rests wholly with the author.

TO THE

MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER,

WHOSE TENDER INTEREST AND ENCOURAGEMENT INSPIRED THE AUTHOR DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE FOLLOWING PAGES, BUT WHOSE LOVING EYE WILL NEVER REST UPON THE PRINTED LINES.

"Her price is far above rubies. Strength and honor are her clothing. Her children arise up and call her blessed."

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
In which we Link Past and Present.	7
CHAPTER II.	
In which we do the same.	14
CHAPTER III.	
Clouds.	24
CHAPTER IV.	
The Ride to Oak Cliff.	33
CHAPTER V.	
The Storm Bursts.	43
CHAPTER VI.	
Lottie and the Baby.	52
CHAPTER VII.	
Franse follows Blakemere.	63
CHAPTER VIII.	
Herr Humbert.	71
CHAPTER IX.	
Kurt of Alten Aar.	83
CHAPTER X.	
The Professor's Home.	95
CHAPTER XI.	
Light and Shade.	107
CHAPTER XII.	
The Puppy and the Concert.	128
CHAPTER XIII.	
Dr. Allison makes a Call, and the Baby puts the Puppy to Bed.	145
CHAPTER XIV.	
Madam Liebnitz.	155

PAGE

CHAPTER XV.

PARALYSIS. 171

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE GRASP OF DISEASE. 185

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INNER AND OUTER MAN. 199

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MISCHIEF DONE BY A GRINDSTONE. 217

CHAPTER XIX.

MABEL TAKES A RIDE WITH DR. ALLISON. 231

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH WE SEE WHAT CAME OF IT. 253

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH A PLEASURE EXCURSION IS ARRANGED. . 269

CHAPTER XXII.

WESSENFELS, AND JOHN FREDERICK WILLIAM JERUSALEM MILLER. 288

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW GOOD-NATURED PEOPLE CONDUCT THEMSELVES UNDER DIFFICULTIES. 308

CHAPTER XXIV.

HERR HUMBERT AT SCHOOL. 323

CHAPTER XXV.

HERR HUMBERT FINISHES HIS LESSON. 341

CHAPTER XXVI.

A GLAD MEETING. 358

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BASTION OF THE OTTOWALDER GRUND. 376

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXPLANATION. 404

"THEIR CHILDREN."

CHAPTER I.

THE home of Charles and Gretchen Franse is to-night the scene of a gay wedding, for though the Herr Professor and his sister, whose lives are familiar to readers of "The Marble Preacher," have long since ascended where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, the twins who bear their names are still on earth, and one has been a bride for nearly an hour.

She is very like her father, the dear Professor, even to the wonderful light that comes into

her eyes, especially when for a moment they are raised to her husband's handsome face.

Her brother regards her with the same protecting tenderness he has manifested from his earliest childhood. He always considered Gretchen as his especial care, and possibly the troubled look in his eyes, so unsuited to the gay scene about him comes from the pain of giving her into the keeping of another.

"Jealous already, Charles?" whispered Mabel Flopstock, who, as first bridesmaid, was his partner for the evening. Then without waiting for an answer she laid her white gloved hand on his arm and said, earnestly, though beneath her breath, "I beg of you, put on a merrier face. Try and make the best of it now it can't be helped. Gretchen won't thank you for telling everybody that you don't like her marriage."

"Nonsense, Mabel!" Charles replied, half impatiently, his affectionate look meanwhile contradicting the tone, for he loved this child of his half sister, the Mabel of "The Marble Preacher," almost as fondly as he did Gretchen.

"Well, take my advice," she said, turning away.

Meantime in a quiet nook a little to one side, sat two elderly matrons engaged in free and not wholly friendly comment on the scene. "Well, well, sighed Mrs. Carper, "these young folks are a long way behind their parents, if I'm any judge. Just think of Professor Franse and that sister of his, what people they were, to be sure."

"Yes, indeed," chimed in Madam De Rogate, "and Mrs. Marsdon, too (I never could learn to call her Madam Franse). Then there was her daughter Mabel, to say nothing of Gretchen Flopstock, and her son Frederick, that Mabel married. Just think what a work he did among the hands employed in that Cantrell firm."

"Well, well, his wife kept up with him, and often got ahead," Mrs. Carper answered with spirit.

"Very likely," rejoined the other, "but no matter which went first, the good was done, and neither time nor money was squandered in show and nonsense."

"Tut, tut, my good ladies," interposed Mr. Cheeryble, an elderly gentleman, who had listened, amused, to this conversation. "If by show and nonsense you mean such fine doings

as this party, we all come under condemnation, inasmuch as we countenance it by our presence."

"On the principle that the partaker is as bad as the thief?" retorted Mrs. Carper.

"Exactly, my dear Madam," he replied.

"But you don't deny the truth of what has been said, I presume," remarked Madam De Rogate.

"So far as the conversation regarded the noble parents and relatives of these young people, I can heartily say amen to it, but when it comes to your estimate of Charles and Gretchen Franse, with their niece, or cousin, as they call her, Mabel Flopstock, I must beg leave to differ. That the children are as yet inferior to their predecessors, I allow, yet I find in them very much both to love and admire. There is much pure gold in each, which I am sure the Divine Refiner will in ways best known to himself, purify from the dross that now mars it."

"I hope so," sighed the lady, elevating her eyebrows, "but really I see no sign of their putting themselves in the way of being so refined."

"It must have grieved the pious old professor, to say nothing of his good wife and sister, that they were called to go without seeing those twins safe in the fold."

"No doubt they would have regarded such a sight as one of God's choicest blessings," returned Mr. Cherryble, gravely. "I well remember Herr Franse's words to me on this very subject but a day or two before he died. He said, 'Many good gifts has the All Father bestowed upon me, but these children seem to have come most directly from his hand. I have tried to train them for him. In leaving them I have no fear. I can trust them wholly in his hands. He will complete the good work in them, I know not how or when, but they will come home to me in heaven.'"

"Well, to look in here to-night one would think their hearts were still considerably set on the things of this life," carped Mrs. Carper. "Judging from appearances, they have spent no end of money. Then just think of a wedding tour in Europe, of six months or a year! What a contrast to the quiet way Mrs. Marsdon and Mabel managed their affairs."

"Granted," replied the gentleman. "But I think the display is due more to the groom than the bride. Blakemere is undoubtedly a little extravagant and fond of show."

"How strange a girl like Gretchen should have loved such a man!" said Madame De Rogate.

"Why strange?" asked Mr. Cherryble, with a quizzical twinkle in his eye. "If Gretchen Franse, or rather Blakemere, belongs to that degenerate company of young scapegoats upon whom I found you ladies sitting in judgment, she does not require much in the man she marries."

"None of your sauce here, sir," replied Madame De Rogate, defiantly shaking her finger at her adversary. "My stomach is too old to bear it. You know very well that Gretchen's strong resemblance to her father, both in intellect and character, make it seem impossible she should ever be happy with such a superficial, visionary, extravagant man as Philip Blakemere. I wonder her brother ever consented to it; but I suppose if she wanted to be burnt at the stake, he would consent, rather than contradict her."

"Perhaps you put it a little strongly," Mr. Cherryble replied, with provoking coolness. "But I believe it is true that neither her brother nor Mabel Flopstock favored the match. Blakemere is, however, a gentleman, with more than ordinary business capacity, and what to Gretchen will be of great importance, an exquisite taste in and love for music. But see, the party is breaking up."

"Then we must go with the rest," the ladies said, rising. And together with Mr. Cherryble, they made their way to the bride, when having wished her all the happiness they had just decided it was impossible for her to have, they departed.

CHAPTER II.

SOON the rooms lately so crowded held only the bridal pair with their immediate attendants. Gretchen was hurried away to exchange her wedding for her traveling dress, and all was bustle and confusion.

The carriage was at the door. There was barely time to reach the train, and so with hasty farewells sounding in her ears, Gretchen was snatched away from all the associations of her previous life.

Charles and Mabel go with the young couple to see them set sail for Europe. Indeed, the brother is strongly inclined to accompany them all the way, and but for business engagements, he would certainly be the one too many on this bridal trip. He

has forced himself to endure a temporary separation, however, in the hope that so his sister's happiness will be best promoted.

Soon they go flying through the night gloom as on the wings of the wind. For Gretchen the fatigue and excitement of weeks have reached their climax on this eventful evening. So she is glad to rest on one of the sofas in the luxurious car that Blakemere has secured for the sole use of the party. Too weary for words, she can only close her beautiful eyes while she tries to calm her emotions.

Mabel is weary too, and glad of an easy-chair beside the sofa, while the gentlemen, quite ready for their share of the refreshing quiet, choose such portions of the remaining comforts as best suit them.

The silence that followed gave Mabel the impression that all were soon asleep. As for herself, her mind was too busy with that painful activity which often follows bodily exhaustion, to permit her to imitate their example.

She thought of her mother, and what she had too often heard her grandmother, Gretchen

Flopstock, say of the quiet bridal by the lakelet near their cottage.

When a little child, she was never weary of hearing the story, and having the exact spot pointed out to her. Then the dear Herr Professor, and his stately wife, her other grandmother, rose before her mental vision. No less dearly did she love to hear the story of their bridal, and she had long known by heart the hymn they sang in the beloved music room at Eau Claire. Involuntarily came the strong contrast between these scenes, as represented to her childish fancy, and those so fresh in her experience.

Then she remembered the words of the wise man, "I said in my heart, go to, now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure, and behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it?" Just now in her weariness, and regret at the parting so near at hand, she was ready to admit the truth of the passage. Although young, she had already tasted some bitter draughts of sorrow. To-night her mind goes back to her childhood, when with her

brother and sisters, the one older, the others younger than herself, she had spent, as it now seemed, one long summer day, lasting not hours, but months and years, while all the happy way danced hand in hand the little Gretchen and her twin brother, playfellows, schoolmates, and warm friends, seeming more to Mabel like another pair in the home nest over which her mother brooded, than the comical little uncle and aunt they really were in virtue of the singular relationship existing between their elders.

Then came sad memories of the dear Herr Professor's patient fading out of life, soon followed by the death of his faithful wife. Before long Gretchen, the Professor's saintly sister, faltered and fell by the way, leaving the twin orphans to the care of their half-sister, the "Leipsic Mabel," a title hallowed by its associations with an eventful past.

But all this was little when compared with the anguish occasioned by the sudden loss of her father, Frederick Flopstock. She well remembered the gentle resignation with which her mother, when the first shock was past,

gathered her children together in the cottage that was her early home, and with her six, as she said, fondly stroking the hair of her little twin brother and sister, set herself bravely to the work of filling to each and all the places of those who had been taken.

This Mabel Flopstock could recall with calmness, for she was little more than a child when she became fatherless. But the tears sprang to her eyes at the thought of her mother's departure, followed as it soon was by that of her brother and youngest sister. During the next year, Lottie, all that now remained to her of her own family, was married and removed to a distance, thus leaving her alone with Charles and Gretchen Franse.

As the life of a plant, when deprived of its many branches throws itself into the remaining few, so Mabel's affectionate nature concentrated itself upon the trio that remained to her. She was thus made keenly sensible of the reasons upon which Charles Franse had opposed his sister's marriage, giving him her hearty sympathy, and so far as she might, seconding his efforts to prevent it.

Philip Blakemere had become known at the cottage only two years previous to the time of which we now write. He then came to Eau Claire as teller in the bank of which his uncle, Mr. Blakemere, was President.

During the first year of his service, Charles Franse held the responsible position of cashier in the same establishment, which in view of his youth was a high tribute to his capacity and trustworthiness as a business man. He had been thoroughly trained in this direction, yet his inclinations led him strongly toward the pursuit of natural science and all kindred studies; so at the end of a year he resigned his position to give himself more entirely to his favorite work.

Young Blakemere having proved himself capable and efficient in his place, was, through the influence of his uncle, appointed to this vacancy.

Meantime he became a favorite in the social circles of Eau Claire, because to a fine exterior, and cultivated manners, he added considerable talent, especially for music, in which he was highly accomplished. To this attrac-

tion he principally owed his success in winning the love of Gretchen Franse. Little dreaming whither it was tending, Charles watched the beginning of their friendship with sincere pleasure, as affording his sister a new source of enjoyment, for she seldom found any one so capable as Blakemere of sympathy with that rare musical talent which, among other gifts, she had inherited from her father. When at last his brotherly eyes were suddenly opened to the truth, the two were floating far beyond recall on the rosy sea of love.

Then followed earnest remonstrance, which Gretchen, gentle as the south wind but firm as the rocks over which it blows, always met with the quiet answer that when any valid objection to her choice was advanced it would be time to reconsider it.

Here was her stronghold, for her brother was unable to define even to himself why he felt so strong a dislike to Blakemere, when viewed in the light of Gretchen's future husband.

There were times, however, when the mere sight of him seemed to chill and darken everything like a sudden cloud in a summer sky. It

was not that his ideas and habits of expenditure were confessedly lavish. He had quite a fortune, and was beside in the receipt of a handsome salary, which with Gretchen's own income would secure them not only comfort but luxury. Nor was it that he failed to love and value the fair girl who was to her brother as the apple of his eye.

It was not that outside approval was wanting, for on every hand he was greeted with congratulations upon the highly suitable match his sister was to form.

But despite all, he could not conquer his aversion, in which he was strengthened if not confirmed by accidentally discovering that Mabel shared it.

All efforts to open Gretchen's love-blinded eyes proved unavailing, however, and her brother at last desisted, convinced of the truth uttered by the great dramatist when he said,—

> "Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
> Thou would'st as soon go kindle fire with snow
> As seek to quench the fire of love with words."

But now the matter is irrevocably fixed, regrets and retrospection are alike useless, and

so Charles, who like Mabel has all this time pretended to be asleep while his mind was busy with the past, determined to dismiss the whole subject. This commendable resolution he carried out by trying for the thousandth time to define the precise cause of his dislike to Blakemere.

Was it because his eye, bright, dark, but restless, could never meet another without wavering and seeking the ground, or because his hand always seemed in a hurry to withdraw itself from the cordial grasp of a friend? Was it because he had a retreating chin, and always wore an irreproachable necktie? Were these reasons to be accepted as sufficient ground upon which to rest his unconquerable aversion to his new brother-in-law?

Surely not; therefore he would love him as he ought, which determination bore immediate fruit in the act of covering Blakemere's sleeping form with a traveling blanket. Then he stole to Gretchen's sofa to find her slumbering quietly, with a smile on her sweet mouth. Mabel smiled up at him also, and put her finger on her lips, seeing him about to whisper a question,

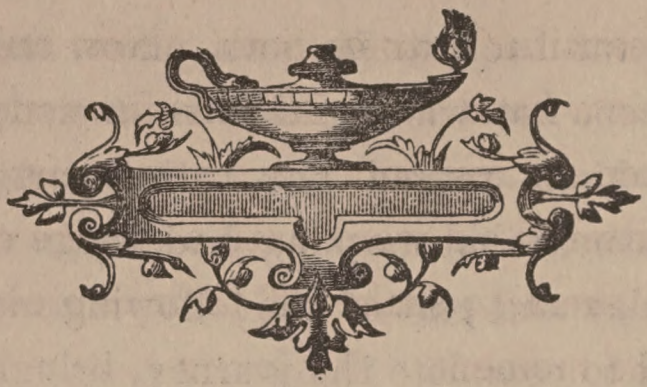
so he went back to his own place, and at last fell asleep, not waking till the melody of the steam whistle roused the entire party to the consciousness that morning had again returned.

This day and part of the following night were required to complete the journey, bringing them to New York barely in season to make their final arrangements for sailing.

Blakemere was much occupied with private business, that required him to leave Gretchen almost wholly to her brother's care, so that they had spent some quiet hours together in the ship before Blakemere came on board, hours that succeeding events made very precious to the memory of each.

"God bless you both!" Charles said fervently, when the time for parting came. "He only knows what this separation costs me; and Philip, as you deal with this precious girl so may he deal with you."

Again he took his sobbing sister in his arms, and without another word went away, followed by Mabel.



CHAPTER III.

AFTER watching the majestic steamer weigh anchor and begin its trackless course over the ocean, Charles and Mabel turned their faces at once toward home.

Mr. Blakemere's consent to his nephew's prolonged absence could only be obtained upon condition that Franse would supply his place. Therefore no time was to be lost in returning to Eau Claire.

Sterne says, "If there is an evil in this world 'tis sorrow and heaviness of heart," and no doubt our young travelers thought so too, as they sat silently side by side, speeding on with ruthless hurry, every moment widening the distance between them and her who had made

home so beautiful to them both. Now and then Charles felt a hand steal into his for sympathy, and as often he responded with a loving clasp, but they uttered no word until a change of cars compelled them to shake off their depression at least for the moment.

After securing their new seats, they seemed again floating out upon a sea of silence as profound if not as wide as that upon which their lost Gretchen was rocking, when Charles was aroused by a cordial "How are you, young man? Sorry to see you looking so blue."

Thus addressed, he sprang hastily to his feet, returning the hearty hand-shake bestowed on him by Mr. Elliot with all the warmth he felt for this old friend of his father, who had also been a friend to himself and Gretchen all their lives.

"This parting with the little sister is sorry business to be sure," he continued in his cheery way, "but never mind; we will soon have her back among us, with no end of foreign nonsense in her pretty head."

Mabel then coming in for her share of attention, and the gentlemen being seated, conversa-

tion began to flow more freely, at least on the part of our hitherto silent travelers.

"I was sorry enough not to help in tying this very important knot in the thread of Miss Gretchen's life," Mr. Elliot went on, "but business detained me in New York. By the way, I understand your new brother-in-law is a fine match, so far as money is concerned. Hartly tells me he is entering largely into speculations that promise well."

"I hardly think that possible," Charles returned. "Philip's private means would not warrant any very extensive operations of that kind, and I am certain he has no borrowed capital."

"Very likely you are right, Franse," Mr. Elliot rejoined. "Hartly spoke merely from hearsay. I would rather believe the young man contented with a safe, if not rapid, increase of money. This mania for speculation hinders more fortunes than it helps, and yet the young ones never seem to take warning, but must learn the truth by their own hard experience. Dear me! I wish I could lend 'em the eyes of my observation to look through, it would save many a poor soul.

"But dear me, what dull talk for this dear young lady," he added, turning gallantly to Mabel, who greeted his mock devotion with a merry laugh so like the "Leipsic Mabel's" that it seemed to come directly out of the past.

"Oh, you know times are changed, Mr. Elliot," she answered, gayly. "Now you can hardly compliment a lady more highly than to take it for granted she is interested and informed on all manly topics. When we women begin to speculate, we shall distance all male competitors. Masculine wealth will then take to itself wings and come flying into our coffers."

"No doubt, no doubt," was the laughing reply, "but I fear if you apply the positive end of your feminine magnet to the attraction of masculine gold, you will find the negative end toward its former owners."

"Perhaps," she answered merrily. "And yet will not our gold of itself overcome any such repulsion?"

"Ah, you sly calumniator!" exclaimed Mr. Elliot, in great glee. "I look for nothing but to see you marry some Mr. Goldinhand, for no reason save his money bags."

"You will never *see* me do that, sir," she answered with mimic scorn. "When I so far forget myself, I shall not invite you to my wedding."

"And I should not come if you did," he replied, with great gravity. "So, on second thought, there is no probability that I shall ever witness such a sacrifice."

It was impossible to be long in Mr. Elliot's company without being infected with his jovial good humor. In the present instance our heavy hearted young friends found their spirits rising to a degree that surprised themselves. Having been much abroad, he could paint such pleasant word pictures of the many places and things Gretchen was to see, at the same time drawing a fund of amusing anecdote from his own experience, that the rest of the journey was performed in comparative cheerfulness.

Arrived at home, they found all things in order and awaiting their return, but as is the familiar form when the soul is fled, so seemed the house without the presence of its gentle mistress; for such Gretchen had been since her "mamma sister," as she delighted to call the "Leipsic Mabel," went home to God.

As was the Herr Professor in his lofty simplicity of character, his purity, gentleness, and faith, so was this daughter of his love. She seemed to have inherited from him, in full perfection, those mental and spiritual traits that in him had been gradually developed by a long course of discipline.

What wonder then that all were amazed when Philip Blakemere secured her unbounded love and esteem, even in the face of most earnest remonstrance from both her brother and Mabel.

But now this was a thing of the past, and Charles resolutely stifled regrets that were worse than useless, compelling his thoughts to fix themselves on the future with what of hope and satisfaction he could command.

Suppressing a sigh of regret as he passed the well beloved library, he went on the morning following his return to Eau Claire, to recommence his labors at the bank, cheering himself with the thought that the separation was but temporary, and borne for the sake of his darling sister.

Mabel, rejoiced to see him thus bravely enter

on his irksome duties, did her best to dispel the loneliness, that made as it were a third presence in chamber, parlor and hall.

A winsome girl was Mabel Flopstock, so like, yet so unlike her mother, so like, yet so unlike her father, a curious blending, with often a glow and sparkle of something all her own, original and fresh as one of the prime colors, not to be formed by ever so skillful blending of any other two.

Many a man would have thought himself sufficiently blessed if she were near, but dearly as Franse loved her, she could not fill to him the place left vacant by his twin sister. Reason with himself as he would, time only seemed to make the separation harder to bear, and when, even earlier than they had hoped, letters arrived, giving unmistakable evidence of her happiness, he knew there mingled with his satisfaction an alloy of bitterness that Gretchen could thus enjoy herself when parted from him.

As yet, he knew no stronger love than that he bore her, and so vexed himself, because, while loving him no less, she loved another more, and that other Blakemere.

Mabel watching him closely, read him aright thus far, yet it seemed to her that the simple fact of Gretchen's marriage and temporary absence, did not sufficiently account for the marked change that began to steal over him, almost immediately after he resumed his duties as cashier.

By degress he lost his cheerful courtesy of manner, and became silent and abstracted. His eye at first took on a look of restless anxiety, very unlike its usual calm earnestness. Then there came into it an expression of pleading helplessness, such as we sometimes see in a suffering animal.

His appetite was fitful, and she often heard his restless pacing to and fro far into the night.

Alarmed and perplexed, Mabel tried every means in her power to win him back to his former cheerfulness, or if not, to win his confidence, and one day when playfully bantering him on his changed appearance, she said,—

"You are a naughty boy, Charles, and I am going to report you to Gretchen, and beg her to come home and see to you."

Suddenly he lifted his eyes to her face,

those helpless, pleading eyes, and exclaimed, "O Mabel, if you love me, promise not to mention anything to Gretchen."

"Charles, what is the matter? May I not know? I who have always been like an elder sister to you both?" Mabel said, pleadingly. Her earnest eyes were full of affection, and as she looked in his face she saw that for an instant he wavered in his stern purpose of secrecy. His overburdened soul gave a glad bound to grasp the comfort of her proffered sympathy, but the next moment the hopelessness came back into his eyes, the fixed resolve about his mouth.

"No, Mabel, I must not, I cannot tell even you. Don't urge me, and above all, promise me that Gretchen shall have no hint that anything is wrong. Have patience, Mabel. Possibly a way may open out of my difficulties. If not—" He left the sentence unfinished, and springing hastily to his feet, left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

"MYSTERY magnifies danger, as a fog the sun." Thus poor Mabel, left to conjecture, grew hourly more alarmed as to the meaning of Charles' words. She longed for some one with whom to share her perplexity; some word of sympathy or counsel, but in no one dared she confide.

Alas, alas! That Infinite friend to whom her mother so early learned to fly for help in time of need, was to her a far off stranger; and so as time wore on, making things worse rather than better, she almost sickened under the load that rested on her spirit.

In the meantime came frequent letters from Gretchen, full of the joy that evidently filled her guileless heart almost to overflowing.

Her husband was all and more than she had believed him. The only shadow that rested on her heart, was her absence from home, Mabel, and above all, her beloved brother Charles. So wrote the happy young wife, yet strange to say, her words seemed only to intensify the cloud that now wrapped her brother in perpetual gloom, while yet he gave no sign of what he saw within.

On one of these dark days Mabel received an invitation to join an equestrian party to Oak Cliff, so called from a majestic tree that stood in solitary grandeur upon a lofty bluff, some miles distant from Eau Claire.

Her skill in, and fondness for this exercise, were both very great, and she consented with more readiness on this occasion, in the hope of finding relief from the almost intolerable anxiety that weighed her down.

Her escort was to be George Werner, a warm friend of Philip Blakemere, with whom, as head teller in the bank of Blakemere & Co., he had been intimately associated. He was a fine horseman and pleasant companion, so all promised fair for an afternoon of enjoy-

ment in the valleys and upon the hills, over which a ripe October was now trailing her glorious autumn robes.

A merrier party was seldom seen, and Mabel soon found her spirits rising under the combined influence of good company, delightful exercise, and the gorgeous coloring displayed on every twig and bough.

Upon reaching the summit of Oak Cliff, our party found the view more than usually fine, owing to the singular clearness of the atmosphere.

"I declare," exclaimed Mr. Specs, a valiant young lawyer, who prided himself greatly upon his mental vision, "I declare, one can almost see those big New York firms topple over and become extinct, the air is so very diaphranous."

Mabel glanced merrily at Werner, sure of his sympathy in her amusement at this outburst of legal eloquence; but instead, she saw that his face was colorless as he turned eagerly to Specs and demanded what he meant.

"Mean, my dear fellow?" he rejoined, "why, I mean just what the telegrams and newspapers have meant all day. There is a

sudden irruption of that financial volcano on which those New York speculators always stand, and a good many of 'em are being swallowed up. Where have you been not to know about it?"

Werner made no answer. He sat for a moment as if stunned, then suddenly turning his horse, began rapidly to descend the steep path leading from the cliff. The party gazed after him in profound astonishment until he disappeared from sight. Then all eyes turned on Mabel, who, nervous from the effect of her continued anxiety about Charles Franse, instantly connected Werner's strange perturbation with his mysterious depression. Pale and agitated, she seemed hardly able to retain her seat in the saddle.

"May I have the pleasure of taking Mr. Werner's place?" asked Dr. Allison, bringing his horse beside Mabel's in such a way as to somewhat shield her from her companions. "You know I am such a stranger in the town I failed to find a partner for the afternoon. You will do me a great favor by making me of use."

The speaker was remarkable for neither grace nor beauty, except so far as a pair of very intelligent and expressive eyes could make him so; yet the richness of his voice, and the elegance of his pronunciation, together with a bearing full of gentle respect, made him very winning.

Mabel, as free from coquetry or affectation as was ever her mother, accepted his escort with grateful frankness, and soon regained her composure under his quiet but skillful attentions. Until now her acquaintance with him had been very slight. She only knew that he had lately established himself at Eau Claire as a physician, and that Mr. Elliot, having known him during his college and medical course, had much to say in his favor, but so great progress was made during the ride home, that he seemed quite like an old friend when they parted at the cottage door, and she readily granted his request to be allowed to call and inquire how she fared after the fatigue of the afternoon.

Once within the shelter of the home roof, however, her mind reverted at once to Wer-

ner's unaccountable behavior, almost distracting her with vague apprehensions of she knew not what evil. She waited eagerly for Charles to return, that she might judge from his appearance whether anything new had occurred to distress him.

It was now long past his usual time for coming home, but as he had lately been often absent far into the evening, she argued nothing from it. The supper grew cold with waiting, hour after hour passed, and still she sat at the window listening between hope and fear for his familiar tread upon the side-walk.

At last she heard a quick step, followed by a loud ring at the street door. She sprang to open it herself, and received a note from the boy who waited. She tore it open, and read by the light of the hall lamp, these words: —

"DEAR MABEL,—Do not sit up for me. I shall not be home to-night, possibly not till late to-morrow.

"Do not worry about me.

"Affectionately, CHARLES FRANSE."

Oh! what did it all mean? What could she,

what ought she to do? were the helpless questions she asked herself. Should she take the faithful servant, who having come up at the ringing of the bell, now stood beside her, and go in search of explanation? Should she summon some friend to her assistance; and if so, who?

Alas, no! she could only stay where she was and wait. With no clue to the trouble, she dared not move, lest harm should come of it. So she turned to the wondering girl, saying,—

"Mr. Charles has sent a note to say that business will detain him away all night. We will fasten the house and go to bed."

"But, Miss, you have eaten no supper yourself," the girl objected. "Let me make you a cup of tea and bring you a bit of something nice in your room."

"Never mind about it, Elra," Mabel answered wearily. "You are a good girl but I'm not hungry," saying which she went slowly up to her chamber.

Elra was not to be thus easily dissuaded however, as the dainty repast she soon placed before her mistress showed; and Mabel, who could do no less than reward her kindness by

tasting the delicacies, having conquered the aversion she felt at even the sight of food, discovered that to eat was the very thing she most needed. Her long ride, together with the excitement she had endured, made bodily refreshment imperative.

Elra looked on well pleased, and when later she stole back to find Mabel sleeping quietly, she indulged in great self-laudation regarding her management. Nor was she mistaken in claiming much wisdom as well as kindness for her act. A young and healthy nature will assert itself, demanding both food and rest, even when, yea, even *more* when care and grief, so foreign to its native mood, are pressing heavily upon the spirit.

Mabel was no exception. She slept dreamlessly till daybreak, awaking so refreshed that for a moment she thought the shadows had all fled with the night. "Oh, that they had!" she sighed, as the truth settled heavily down upon her. Then she rose, and dressed carefully, thinking to look her best for Charles' sake. Afterward she wandered into Gretchen's room, adjoining her own, where all things were so

fragrant with the memory of her sister, as she loved to call her. There in a crimson lined alcove, the better to display its pure white beauty, stood Lombard's Temple on its ebony stand. But the Herr Professor and his Leipsic Mabel would hardly have been pleased to see it thus displayed. To them this "Marble Preacher" had been what true preachers always are to those who listen, a preacher of righteousness, not a mere art-work to be set off by studied contrast of color, and a favoring light.

The alcove where *they* treasured it, was in their hearts, from whence it made its beauty seen in their daily lives.

But as Mabel's eye rested on it she thought only of her mother, forgetting how it had helped to mould her pure life.

Her soul cry, with the tears falling unheeded over her face, was, "Oh, if she were only here!" But the clear voice for which she longed was hushed to mortal ears, as were all those that had cheered and guided the "Leipsic Mabel," all save One, and to that the daughter was still deaf. She did not ask, and so received not. She did not seek, and therefore did not find.

For want of knocking she remained outside that door which, being opened, admits to treasures compared with which the wealth of the whole world is poverty. Thus she turned away, heart heavy and uncomforted, to her solitary breakfast, afterward going the round of her morning duties with mechanical precision, all the time vainly straining her ear for the first sound of Charles' homecoming.

CHAPTER V.

FEAR sometimes adds wings to the heels, and sometimes nails them to the ground, and fetters them from moving.

The latter had been true of Mabel thus far, for she remained at home, not daring to stir for fear of doing harm. But when dinner time came, and passed away, bringing no tidings; when the sun began to cast long shadows, she could endure no longer, and hastily putting on her bonnet, she went out. Now it was that fear added the wings. She sped along, not heeding those she met, till she was suddenly arrested by hearing her name called, when looking up she found herself face to face with Charles Franse.

"Oh, where have you been?" she cried,

then paused, arrested by the change that had fallen upon him since they parted.

He seemed to have aged by many years, so altered were the lines of his face, so full of a proud sorrow, that seemed to hold itself aloof alike from complaint or sympathy. The wistful look that Mabel had so often noticed in his eyes, was exchanged for an expression of stern resolve, that had also settled about the mouth, rendering the usually mobile lips almost rigid in their severe expression. In short, his whole countenance had undergone such a transformation as made it seem like that of another man, but as he drew Mabel's arm within his own, the old affectionate look came back into his face, and his voice was full of tenderness, as he said,—

"You have been lonely and anxious, Mabel, you were coming to find me?"

"I have, indeed," she answered, struggling to check the tears that choked her voice. "Tell me what is the matter. What has happened?"

"Let us go home first," he said, walking on wearily, as if carrying a heavy load.

"Yes, home," she acquiesced. And then tried to cheer the way by telling him of a letter from Gretchen, received that day, full of love and hope and happiness.

At first he listened patiently, if nothing more, but when she spoke of Blakemere, and Gretchen's still enthusiastic praise of him, he shrank as from the cruel probing of a wound. Then the look of fixed resolve came back into his face, completely silencing Mabel for the rest of the way.

"I am very weary," he said, putting his hat in its accustomed place upon the rack. "I have neither eaten nor slept since I left you yesterday morning. I will go up to my room and try for a little rest."

"Not till you have had dinner, Charles," Mabel said, decidedly. Then suddenly seizing his hands, she cried, imploringly, "Oh, do not keep me any longer in this agony of suspense. Tell me what has happened!"

He made no answer, but drew her into the library, and closed the door.

"Mabel," he began, then faltered, as if unable to utter the words that rose to his lips.

"What is it, Charles?" she urged. "Be frank with me, your loving sister."

"Would that I could be!" he exclaimed, vehemently. "But I can confide in no one, not even you. All I can say is, there is trouble at the bank. To-day there has been a meeting of the President and Directors. I am no longer desired as cashier, and Philip Blakemere is to be recalled. At my own request, I go at once to Germany, to explain matters and secure his immediate return. This is cold comfort, Mabel," he went on, "but it is all I can give. Therefore, if you love me, ask no questions."

"And Werner?" Mabel ventured timidly.

"He was absent for some days in the country," Charles answered, speaking as if the bare mention of the name angered him. "Yesterday he returned, and in the afternoon joined a horseback party, since which time he has not been seen."

"And is this all you can tell me, Charles?" Mabel asked. "Am I to have no explanation? Is there to be no confidence between us?"

"Do not reproach me, Mabel," Charles answered, gloomily. "As I said to you once before, I can make no one my confidant, not even you. Therefore, do not add to my burden by further importunity."

"Oh, this is terrible!" exclaimed Mabel, burying her face in her hands, as if to shut out the only reasonable solution of the mystery that presented itself, viz., wronging on the part of Franse. Her mind having been stretched on the rack of suspense for weary weeks, was illy prepared to endure further torture, yet there seemed no escape. Unlike her mother, she could not take refuge in the loving arms of him, who seeing the end from the beginning, is able to bring light out of darkness. She saw no bow of promise on the cloud. What wonder then she cried, "How terrible!"

Charles looked at her with a silent, hopeless anguish, pitiful to see, but made no effort to console her. Indeed, he was just then sorely in need of consolation himself.

A gentle knock called him to the door, and upon its being opened, Elra handed him the card of Dr. Allison.

"He asked for Miss Mabel," the girl said.

"Oh, I cannot see him!" she exclaimed. "Say I am engaged. Beg him to excuse me."

"Wait a moment outside, Elra," Charles interposed, and closing the door, he said, taking her hand, "Mabel, I beg that if possible, you will see this gentleman, who I suppose has come merely for a call. I entreat you to appear as if nothing had happened. Of course a thousand rumors will be abroad regarding the change at the bank, but the truth will probably never be guessed at, certainly never made public. Whatever Mr. Blakemere and the Directors think of me, they have promised to keep our transactions private. Try then, Mabel, to conceal your own distress, which God knows I would gladly spare you."

"I see — it is best — I will try," she said slowly, like one consenting to some painful operation. Then she rose up, and passed through the door he held open for her, but seeing Elra, paused to give some directions for Charles' comfort.

"Never mind, little coz, run along," he

said, trying to speak in the old, playful tone. "Elra and I will arrange to suit ourselves."

Thus urged, the suffering girl went to her guest, doing her best to appear as usual, but utterly failing to blind the experienced eye of the physician to agitation.

Meanwhile Elra set her most tempting dishes before her exhausted charge, and seeing him eat, said in her heart,—

"I reckon it is not so bad after all," meaning the trouble.

Shakspeare says of sleep, "It seldom visits sorrow," but adds, "When it does it is a comfort."

Such indeed it proved to Charles after his long and harrowing watch, wrapping him in temporary unconsciousness of every ill.

With Mabel it dealt less kindly, however, perhaps because there mingled with her distress much wounded pride that Charles refused to confide in her. She could imagine no justification for such reserve with her who had always been to him like an elder sister. Bearing her trouble in her own strength, without one uplift of her aching heart to the only

perfect Comforter and Guide, what wonder that the pain made her unreasonable! What wonder that pride and anger rode rough shod over a spirit so sorrow-sick as her's! Rather wonder that she and every other helpless mortal is not trampled beyond rising beneath the ills they heir with their first breath, unless they can escape to the only sure Fortress, which is God.

They met at breakfast, Mabel and Charles, their real affection sadly overshadowed by cool reserve on the one side, and moodiness on the other. Their feeble attempts to speak on indifferent matters were soon abandoned for complete silence.

At last Charles said, abruptly, "I must leave to-night, Mabel. What friend can you ask to stay with you till"—he paused, as if unable to utter his sister's name, then went on, forcing himself to say, firmly, "till Gretchen and Philip return?"

"Oh, do not disturb yourself about me," she answered, coldly. "I shall do very well. Let me know what I can do for you."

"As you please," he replied, sadly, pained

by her manner. "You will not be long alone."

Mabel always remembered that day as the most bitter she ever endured. Pride held Love chained hand and foot; a gag was in his mouth, so that even at the last he could only utter an inarticulate cry, as the stricken man bade Mabel good bye and went away. Then suddenly grown strong through the agony of parting, he sprang to his feet with such a moan as made the poor girl weep scalding tears, longing to throw her arms about her brother's neck with words of comfort, when, alas, it was too late.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW strangely does the body remain anchored in the familiar harbor of daily routine, when the mind, driven from its moorings is tossed on a wild sea of doubt and distress.

So thought Mabel, busying herself with her every day affairs, alone in the cottage, while in sorrow and perplexity she reviewed again and again the strange events of the few past weeks, or followed the traveler on his solitary way.

Now it was that she yearned for her mother as in the first days of her bereavement. She spent hour after hour in looking over letters and other mementoes of the time when, like herself, her mother had been young.

She could say with the poet,—

"When all the midnight winds are still,
And silence is a thing one hears,
I make my lamp's pale peaceful glow
Light me among the buried years.

"Time wasted are the words I meet
Along each yellowed page they fill,
But all their cadences are sweet—
Their perfume lingers still."

Searching thus one night, she took up a paper worn and tear blistered. Carefully unfolding it she read the Herr Professor's letter to his Leipsic Mabel, with which the readers of "The Marble Preacher" are familiar. There were other records also in her mother's handwriting, apparently of words he had spoken to her at various times, all connected with that exquisite temple in the crimson lined alcove of Gretchen's chamber.

Over one Mabel lingered long. It was a transcript of the counsel he gave his "*daughter*" when, in obedience to her mother's stern command, she was forced to leave him for her uncle's house. The loving girl had carefully set down his words, that none of them might be lost to her, little dreaming what in after years would be their effect upon her own dear child.

But, saith the Preacher, "The words of the wise are as goads," and such in this case they proved, stirring up the slumbering conscience to which they now seemed to apply themselves as if written for it alone.

In all her previous life, Mabel had been surrounded by such an atmosphere of love and purity as apparently to forbid the growth of evil in her soul, yet while lacking nothing that makes perfection in the world's judgment, she felt, sitting in the silence of her own chamber, with the earnest words of Herr Franse before her, that her heart was not right with God.

Hitherto, she had gone little below the surface in her soul questionings. Believing herself as good as most, indeed much better than some among her associates, she remained contented; but suddenly these words confronted her: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," and her comfortable cloak of self-righteousness slipped from her shoulders, leaving her shivering and helpless at the entrance of that way upon which she had as yet taken not the first step. Across the very beginning stood this command: "Give me thine heart."

Would she obey? Alas, no! At least, not then and there. In her own soul she was to find verified the teaching of the great Apostle who wrote, "The carnal mind is enmity to God; for it is not subject to the law of God."

Slowly she folded up the papers and put them carefully away. Slowly she prepared for her nightly rest. She paused to do many trifling things about her room, setting this in order, laying that away, and lingering over all to avoid the moment when in obedience to a lifelong habit implanted by her mother, she should read her Bible, and repeat her evening prayer. Until this night she had offered a vain oblation. Now she longed to fall upon her knees and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," but pride restrained her, and for the first time in her recollection she went to rest, leaving her prayers unsaid. Yet was her present state better than her past; for as in certain fevers the slightest pain is joyfully welcomed as a sign of improvement, so this omission was a token of awaking in Mabel's soul.

She was by nature proud, and strong of will, characteristics hardly called forth rebelliously in

all her previous life, but now they rose in full strength against the simple submission that distinguishes every child of God.

Now followed wretched days for Mabel Flopstock, days in which she sought no more comfort from the records of her mother's past life, while yet those tear blistered papers were almost never absent from her mind.

Elra wondered at the captious, irritable moods in which her young mistress, usually so calm and sunny, now indulged.

The little world of Eau Claire, into which she threw herself with a feverish desire to escape her own thoughts, as well as to fulfill the wish expressed by Charles, that she would try to appear unconcerned, began to notice the new element of sarcasm that had lately shown itself in her hitherto sprightly conversation. In short, a change had taken place in her, apparent to all, but for which none could satisfactorily account.

Perhaps Dr. Allison divined more nearly than any other the true solution. He seemed to have a singular insight into character, reading it correctly, even upon slight acquaintance, the study of human nature being with him a passion.

He was profoundly interested in Mabel from the first. Still they met but seldom, and then only in society, as he refrained from repeating his call at the cottage now that Mabel was so wholly alone.

To her there was that in him, whether calmness of manner, honesty of thought and expression, sound sense, or what she could not define, that always brought relief to her troubled soul. She often found herself wishing she could ask his advice regarding her heart sickness, as others did for their bodily infirmities.

Thus musing, Mabel was alone in her sitting-room one day about three weeks after Charles' departure. Her face was buried in her hands, while painful thought so absorbed her as to prevent her hearing the door behind her gently open, or seeing the pantomime that followed.

In the hall outside stood a lady clad in traveling costume, noiselessly gesticulating to a little child to run forward into Mabel's sight. With her finger on her lips to impose silence, she waved the other hand encouragingly as the baby, for she seemed little more, hung back afraid. At last seeing her mother, for such the

lady was, form her lips into the word "*naughty!*" with an ominous shake of the head, the little one slowly advanced to Mabel's chair, and standing behind it, peered round into her face, with,—

"Don't 'ou see Jennie?"

With a sudden start Mabel looked up at the little figure beside her, clad in its thick wraps, a velvet cap on its head, from beneath which floated a mass of golden, wavy hair.

Her large, earnest eyes were fixed on Mabel's face in wonder, her rosy lips were slightly parted, showing the little milk white teeth, while her glowing cheeks made a striking contrast to the wonderful whiteness of her skin.

"Why, whose little girl are you?" Mabel asked, taking the tiny white mittened hand in her own. "Are you come to see me?"

"I's mamma's itty girl," replied the child, drawing away her hand. "We's come to see auntie."

Just then Mabel heard a smothered laugh in the hall, and running to the door, she saw the roguish face of her only and long absent sister, Lottie Granger.

"O you darling thing, you!" cried the young mother, hugging and kissing Mabel, amidst laughter and tears. "Just to think of your never getting my letter! I knew how it was the moment I reached the station and found no one there to meet me, so I bethought myself to give you a pleasant surprise. But dear me! what was you thinking about not to hear us? Was you asleep, or only dreaming day dreams?"

"Why, Lottie, what does it all mean?" Mabel said, almost too astonished and overjoyed for words. "Where is your husband? You surely have not come all this weary way alone, with that tot?"

"Not I!" rejoined Lottie. "I never was made to do anything alone. Don't you remember how I always took those horrid seams mother dear used to make us sew, to the neighbors for company? You may be sure Edward knew me too well to send me off alone, and as he could not bring me, he was kind enough to bestow me with baby and the trunks upon an unfortunate friend of his who was coming this way. I don't believe the man will ever be his friend again!"

"Well, darling, don't stand any longer here," Mabel said, drawing her sister into the familiar sitting-room. "You shall tell me all about everything presently, but first get off these wraps."

Meantime baby Jennie was slowly wandering from one object of interest to another, evidently investigating her new quarters with infantile curiosity.

At last her peregrinations were brought to a summary end by an unlucky foot-stool over which she tumbled, her roly poly little body falling plump at Lottie's feet.

"Never mind, pet," she cried, catching the child merrily in her arms, and stopping the rising sobs with kisses. "Let us get off these naughty leggings and things so Jennie can trip round like a fairy."

"I dess I isn't hurted muts," she said, trying to be brave in the presence of her new auntie, who was busy in removing sacque, mittens, hat, &c.

"I dess papa Ned would 'mend his itty girl. Don't 'ou mamma?"

"Mend her? Why where is she broken?" asked Mabel, laughing.

"Oh, she meant praise her because she doesn't cry," Lottie explained. "He said something once about commending her, and she caught the word, calling it 'mend for short."

Much amused, Mabel for a time devoted herself to her little guest; but in these first moments of reunion the sisters could not long forego the delight of attending exclusively to each other.

So baby Jennie, quickly divining that she and her small affairs had been displaced by the more mature interests of mamma and auntie, silently slid from Lottie's lap and cuddled herself away on a low stool by the fire.

So still was she that her little presence was forgotten until Lottie's maternal ear caught the sound of a suppressed sob, and turning to look at the child she saw the big tears rolling over her chubby cheeks.

"Why darling, what *is* the matter!" she exclaimed, kneeling beside the child, and putting her arms about her.

At this the floodgates of childish grief were opened, and beginning to sob violently, she faltered forth, "I wants my bed and mick in my

itty fite bowl, and my kitty and papa Ned, and all my sings. *I hate aunties!*"

"Why, Jennie Granger! stop this minute," cried poor Lottie, utterly horrified at such an exhibition before her sister Mabel, of whom it must be confessed she stood somewhat in awe. "Do you kiss auntie this minute, and say you are sorry."

"Never mind now Lottie," Mabel said. "We are more to blame than she is. She has been neglected till she has grown lonely and homesick. When she sees my four little kittens that I am going to bring now, and my beautiful bowl of bread and milk, with all the rest of my nice things, she will love aunties."

Before the words were spoken baby Jennie ceased crying, and turned her head enough to enable one bright little eye to view the owner of *four* kittens, and before long she was trotting along to inspect them hand in hand with her now charming auntie.

Here we will leave them for a time, while we explain this unexpected arrival at the cottage.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was now nearly four years since Lottie Flopstock married Edward Granger, and went with him to the beautiful city of Madison, Wisconsin, where he had established himself as a lawyer. He had risen rapidly in his profession, and Lottie declared there was nothing left of him for her and the baby but a few crumbs of time morning and night, that only just saved them from starving. She said that one great reason for visiting Eau Claire was the hope that her husband's letters would contain more words than he found time to speak to her when at home, all of which meant that he was very busy, and she was very proud of it; loving him all the better because of his success.

Nevertheless she so longed for a sight of

Mabel and the dear old home, especially after the coming of baby Jennie, her young mother heart being eager to display this new treasure, that Granger finally consented to their coming east, promising to follow as soon as his business would allow, and take them home.

As we have seen, her letter announcing this plan, failed to reach its destination, thus giving her an opportunity for the surprise already mentioned.

In the present condition of things at the cottage, the advent of two such merry-makers as Lottie Granger and her little one, was most opportune, diverting Mabel's thoughts into a more healthy channel. Her sister, always as frolicsome as a kitten, seemed to have lost nothing of her playfulness amid the cares of wife and motherhood; while baby Jennie, with her quaint ways and queer sayings, proved a constant source of delight and amusement to her auntie.

Yet the shadows on Mabel's spirits often made themselves apparent even to Lottie's unobservant eyes, setting her wondering whence they came; yet as she had a little store of

sense somewhere in her frolicsome pate, she asked no questions, only making herself and her baby as bewitching as possible whenever a chill began to steal into the domestic atmosphere.

Mabel doubted if she found her husband's letters as good a substitute for his presence as she professed to do. At least they were sufficiently long and frequent, calling forth such answers from his gay little wife as drew upon her much good-natured railery from her sister.

One letter only had come from Charles, a short note announcing his safe arrival in New York, coupled with an intimation that he should not write again until he fixed upon some definite plan for the future.

Frequent accounts came from Gretchen, descriptive of the rare pleasures she was daily enjoying, while all unknown to her, the twin brother she so loved, performed his solitary voyage across the ocean.

If the previous weeks of excitement had in any measure hidden from him his true position, he had now full leisure to realize it in all its bearings.

It is, however, no part of our present business to act as a spy upon his thoughts. Like his fellow passengers, we will respect his evident desire to escape observation, and content ourselves with knowing that he is apparently a silent, reserved man, shunning companionship whenever possible, yet when compelled to accept it, showing himself an intelligent and polished gentleman.

The passage was a short one, and upon landing he took the first possible train to Switzerland, where at Lausanne he expected to find Gretchen and Philip Blakemere.

Hurrying on with all speed, he arrived at midnight, and went at once to the hotel where he knew them to be staying. But, though weary from his rapid journey, he felt no desire for rest, and paced his room till morning. Then, with the earliest sounds betokening movement in the house, he rang his bell for a waiter.

"Can you tell me at what hour Mr. Blakemere leaves his room?" he asked.

"Not early, sir," the man replied. "He is sometimes as late as nine, never before eight."

"Take this card," said Franse, giving the man his name and the number of his room. "Hand it to him as soon as he comes down, and say I wish to speak with him here at once. Do not give it to him in presence of any one, especially his wife." Then placing money in the servant's hand, he added, "Do my bidding faithfully, and I will reward you."

"Trust me, sir," the man answered, and withdrew, now fully alive to the importance of the occasion.

Charles looked at his watch. It was two hours before he could hope to see Blakemere. To wait here with nothing to do was beyond his endurance, and so taking his hat he went forth into the morning.

The town of Lausanne, lying upon the slope of the Jura mountains, more than four thousand feet above the level of the sea, commands one of the most magnificent views to be found. For seventy miles up and down, the eye can roam over the bright waters of Lake Geneva, while beyond on the opposite shore rise mountains six thousand feet high. To-day they were wrapped about their base

with a delicate mist, that rose from the lake like incense, and vailed, without hiding, their grandeur.

As Charles paced up and down upon the shore, his self-absorption yielded somewhat to the beauty of the scene.

Looking on the glorious landscape he could almost fancy no blight of sin or sorrow rested on this fair earth or any of her children. For a moment he was again free and happy as of old; but alas, only for a moment. He remembered the stern errand that brought him to Lausanne, and retraced his steps to be ready for his appointment.

Scarcely had he regained his room, when Blakemere entered, exclaiming, "Why, Franse, my dear fellow, how are you? I was never so astonished in my life. Come to our rooms. Gretchen will never forgive me if I keep you from her a moment."

"Does my sister know I am here?" asked Charles, in a cold, grave tone, that chilled the rush of Blakemere's welcome.

Withdrawing his hand, and letting his eyes fall to the floor, he answered,—

"I have this moment received your card."

"How long can you stay here without her missing you?" asked Charles.

"Oh, for an hour or so. I was just going out for a walk, while she writes home," Philip answered, his handsome face becoming visibly pale and disturbed.

"I am glad of this," Charles returned. "Gretchen must not know of my being here, but I have much to say to you, Blakemere."

With these words he carefully closed the door, locking it on the inside.

What passed within was known alone to the two; but when Blakemere came out, his whole countenance wore unmistakable signs of strong agitation.

"For Gretchen's sake," Charles said, standing on the threshold.

"Yes, for Gretchen's sake," Philip answered. "Nothing else could tempt me to this."

"Oh, if I could only see her!" Franse said aloud, turning back into the room, and commencing to replace the few articles he had taken from his valise. "How can I go away without once hearing her dear voice,

or taking her in my arms. But, no, I must be strong for her sake. It would not do. She would suspect." So with this resolve, he turned his face from Lausanne that very afternoon, to go, whither he hardly knew or cared.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRETCHEN wrote a happy letter to Mabel, telling her of yesterday's sail on the lake thirty-five miles away, to where lies the fair city of Genoa. Page after page she filled with glowing descriptions, and closed with a gay message to "The Twin," as she laughingly called her brother, for whom, despite all her happiness, she had many a secret longing.

The letter accomplished, she discovered that it was long past the time when Philip was to have returned, and after waiting two more weary hours, she became first impatient, then anxious at his prolonged absence. When at last he came, she sprang toward him in alarm, at the change in his countenance and demeanor.

"Why, Philip, you are sick!" she cried.

"Oh, no, not in the least," he replied, sitting down in the chair she drew toward him. "I have had a long walk, and am tired; beside, I am vexed by some unexpected news from home, which I fear will oblige us to return directly."

"Philip, what is the matter?" she faltered, the color leaving her face. "Is Charles sick?"

"No, only sick of his duties at the bank. He won't attend to them any longer, and my uncle insists on my going back at once. Beside, he's in a great hurry to set out for Germany. He is always agog about his scientific studies, you know; so there is nothing for it but to give up our plans and return forthwith."

Blakemere spoke rapidly, his restless eyes never meeting Gretchen's, while his hands, moving restlessly upon the chair arms, at last took refuge behind him, as if they dreaded being forced into contact with the delicate palms to which they had so lately been united.

Though Gretchen remembered afterward how parrot-like her husband's words sounded, she did not think of it now in the anxious

astonishment they aroused. Kneeling beside him, and lifting her magnificent, truthful eyes to his, she said, "This is not like Charles. Something is withheld from me, Philip."

"Do you doubt me?" he said angrily, springing to his feet, and turning hastily away from her. "There is a letter from your brother himself telling you all about it. Possibly you will believe him." He held the letter toward her, still keeping his head averted.

Gretchen took it mechanically, and sitting down, began removing the envelope, as if scarcely conscious of what she was doing.

For the first time her husband had spoken harshly to her. How she had offended him she did not know. Indeed, she scarcely knew anything save that there was a dreadful ache at her heart. Philip, looking at her, as her eyes followed the words without seeming to comprehend their meaning, saw no anger in her beautiful face, only the sad surprise there is in the face of a little child, when for the first time its dearest earthly treasure lies broken at its feet. Nothing will ever be quite the same to it again. It has learned the dire

possibility inherent in all things earthly, they may break. What though Blakemere takes his wife back to his heart with loving words, says he spoke angrily because he could not bear she should be arrested in her pleasuring; what though he sue for and receive full pardon, will he ever be to Gretchen quite the same again? Can she ever forget the possibility just revealed to her, a possibility of which she never thought? We trow not. Alas, that Philip Blakemere has spoken his first unkind word to his gentle wife!

Charles' letter was an attempt at his old time playful way of writing to his pet sister, but after many perusals she knew only too well that the light-heartedness was feigned to hide — what? Ah, yes, how many times she tried to solve the question, that as often baffled her beyond probable conjecture. Yet with a firmness of purpose few would have discovered under the gentle dependence of her surface character, she determined to appear satisfied, and quietly bide her time. If she noticed the various signs of disquietude often but too evident in her husband, she gave no

outward sign. She appeared well pleased with the sudden change in their plans, a satisfaction not all feigned, for she longed for the dear old home. Therefore she bade good bye to the bright waters of Lake Leman with sunny smiles, when on the third day from that when she had been unconsciously for hours under the same roof with her brother, they turned their faces toward their native land.

We need not join them on their voyage, but rather let us follow Charles Franse, as slowly, alone and on foot, he wanders along his uncertain way, caring little whither it may lead him.

Gretchen would hardly have known the face that till lately had been to her the dearest of any upon earth. There was such a blending of hopelessness and resolve in its expression, it seemed to have lived so many years since she had seen it, that she might well be pardoned for denying its twinship with herself.

Thus drifting purposely upon the new current of life that had floated him a stranger into a strange land, Charles one day sought

the refreshment of a rude stone seat, that stood by the road side mid-way between the crest and base of a mountain down which he was finding his way into the valley below. The scene was desolate in the extreme. Above, a dull gray sky, from which the snow flakes, shivering in the keen wind, sought refuge upon the frozen earth. High above him on a rocky point stood the ruins of an ancient castle, while below in the valley nestled a little hamlet, beside the river Aar, that flowed on dark and chilly.

To the wayfarer, foot-sore and weary from prolonged and unusual exertion, the village looked like a refuge.

"I will rest here," he said, half aloud. "I will rest, and try to lay some plan for the future." Then rising, he made his way to the hamlet. Going along its one street, he looked in vain for an inn, until coming to the last cottage, he knocked at the door to inquire where he could find lodgings. A tidy young woman answered his summons, and when his dilemma was made plain to her, she smilingly told him that he was already at the right

place, as, there being no inn, she and her husband entertained any travelers who came that way.

A glance sufficed to show him that here he would find at least a clean and cheerful lodging; so without hesitation he entered, and was soon enjoying the simple fare it afforded.

Up to this time he had scarcely known what food passed his lips, or been conscious of the exertion he was forcing his body to undergo, but to-day the physical goaded beyond endurance had asserted itself over the mental, and the spirit of Charles Franse was helplessly under control of his body.

Had his constitution been less vigorous, severe sickness would have followed. As it was, he experienced only unutterable weariness, a lassitude not to be resisted, and that made hour after hour of perfect repose seem like the dearest luxury.

He was indifferent alike to the past and the future, simply from inability to feel. Perhaps his most powerful sensation next to the enjoyment of rest, was a sort of mild wonder at the state of mind and body in which he found himself.

Would it be always thus? Had the excitement of the last three months quite transformed him? Would he stay here, eating and sleeping, unable to care much of anything for the rest of his mortal life? Would he ever see Gretchen again? Was he utterly cut off from his former life, that blessed life in the dear old home?

Such and kindred thoughts wandered quietly through his brain, causing almost no emotion, until one day there came to the hamlet, and consequently to the cottage, a stranger on foot and alone as had Franse, but evidently not over weary either in mind or body.

The new comer was a man, short of stature, broad-shouldered and muscular, with a face and head that could hardly escape notice even in a crowd. The massive forehead, keen but laughing eyes, straight nose, firm mouth, and vigorous chin, united with a clear, ruddy complexion, and dark, not over fine hair, plentifully sprinkled with silver threads, made a whole not easily forgotten when once seen. He gave his name as Henrich Humbert, saying he wished to remain some days, as he

was searching upon the mountain for certain specimens connected with his studies as a naturalist.

The travelers met first at supper, where Herr Humbert eyed his companion with evident interest, though no words passed between them beyond a polite greeting.

The meal over, Charles retired at once to his own room, while the German set himself to discover something about his fellow-lodger. There was little to be learned beyond his name, however, but that seemed to affect him sensibly.

"Herr Charles Franse!" he cried, "why that is a name I love. It belonged to one of the noblest men I ever knew. I must get acquainted with the boy."

Having formed this excellent determination, he betook himself to rest, and slept as those only do whose physical condition is wholly sound.

When next morning the two met again at breakfast, Charles was not well pleased that Herr Humbert should approach him with great cordiality, exclaiming,—

"A good morning to you, young man. I claim acquaintance on the score of your name, which is as familiar to me as my own, and much dearer, seeing it belonged to a far better man. Are you at all related to Professor Franse, formerly of Leipsic University?"

"I am his son, sir," Charles replied, with that air of stately reserve, so like his mother, a bearing that generally froze all advances against which it was directed. On the present occasion its effect was overborne by the added interest aroused in Herr Humbert by his words.

"His son!" he cried, seizing Charles by both hands, and shaking them violently. "Did he ever tell you about Henrich Humbert?"

"The learned scientist?" exclaimed Charles, growing eager in his turn, and returning the hand-shakes with interest. "Indeed he has many times. He used to say that of all his associates in the University, Herr Humbert—" Here Franse hesitated, and colored violently.

"I know, my boy," the scholar said, a shadow coming into his face, with the sigh that came up from his very heart. "The

good Herr loved me for my science, but not for my creed. He was always grieving that he could not open my eyes to what he called truth, but we did not see alike in these matters. Yet I am bound to confess that he had the best of it if the correctness of our beliefs is to be tested by their effects upon our lives. But enough of this. Tell me what brings you here, and whither you are going?"

These direct and searching questions, though merely asked in a spirit of friendship, proved very embarrassing to our young friend. He colored painfully under the keen eyes that looked so directly into his, but after a moment's hesitation he answered with something of his previous hauteur, "Matters of a private nature brought me here, but my future course is undetermined."

"Very well," returned the German, good-humoredly, "I don't wish to force your confidence, only remember Henrich Humbert stands ready to serve Charles Franse's son in any way possible."

The cordiality of this answer completely disarmed the young man's reserve, and brought

the tears to his eyes. Seeing which, Herr Humbert hastened to prevent any reply by asking Charles to join him in his morning's excursion on the mountain. Fearing that a refusal might seem ungracious, Franse roused what little energy he possessed, and the two went out together.

CHAPTER IX.

HERR HUMBERT, enthusiastic in regard of his studies, saw with delight that in young Franse he had found a kindred spirit; for Charles' delight in scientific pursuits, suspended by recent events, now returned in full force, under the influence of this master mind. He forgot to be weary; he was no longer sad while listening eagerly to the opinions, and discussing the topics called forth by the progress of their search upon the mountain.

Occasionally he was reminded by some casual remark of his father's regret at Herr Humbert's free thinking on matters of Christian faith; yet they quickly dropped out of mind,

and were forgotten in the pleasure of their scientific sympathy.

"Well, boy, it is high noon," the German said, coming to the rude seat where Charles had rested on his first descent into the valley. "I have led you a pretty way for a sick man. Sit down here and rest while I prepare you a draught of this excellent ale. I declare!" he ejaculated, opening the dinner basket, "our tidy hostess knows how to repair the waste made in our bodily machinery by this search after knowledge, as well as though she had studied the subject all her life."

"I have found her singularly kind and attentive," Charles replied. "Her only trouble has been that I would not allow all the coddling she wanted to give."

"My style of coddling seems to have done you more good than hers," laughed the German, "and I believe a little more of the same would effect a complete cure. What say you to accompanying me to Leipsic, as a sort of secretary or assistant, or whatever you choose to call it? I am always collecting specimens of various sorts, but have no time for ar-

ranging them. I have longed for some one to help me, but I never before saw the man I would trust. If I am not mistaken, you are just the man I want. With you my treasures will be safe, for you will fully appreciate their value. Think of my proposition, and let me know your decision presently."

Though Herr Humbert had at first spoken jestingly, he ended in earnest, and Charles suddenly found a definite purpose in life confronting him, when but now he seemed drifting as helplessly as a leaf upon the river's breast. Though pleased at the confidence so readily reposed in him, he well knew it was mainly due to the name he bore. Still he felt certain of proving his personal right to it; and his heart bounded with something quite like its old delight, at thought of the rare advantages afforded him for the pursuit of his favorite studies.

Herr Humbert was not slow to perceive the pleasure his plan aroused; therefore he was prepared for the answer that followed.

"But one consideration makes me hesitate to accept your offer, my dear sir, which is

that I may disappoint your expectations. As for myself, the advantages thus held out are as tempting as they are unexpected."

"Very well, then, we will consider the thing arranged," replied the scholar, evidently well pleased. "I shall soon let you know if you don't suit me. I can't spend my time keeping guard over my feelings, and they speedily find their way out. I want you to be equally honest with me, so put no constraint on yourself if you don't find things to suit. From this moment, however, until further notice from one side or the other, I shall consider you my private secretary, your salary to begin to-day. The amount shall be fixed when we reach home."

"You are kind, sir," Franse said a little stiffly, not liking this off-hand way of arranging the matter. "You are very considerate, but I can receive no compensation at least until I learn my duties. I doubt not my time and labor will be sufficiently rewarded by the privilege of studying your collections."

"Nonsense, boy," the other returned impatiently, "sorting my specimens may help

feed your mind, but not your body. I intend to give you a place under my roof and at my table, provided you are suited, but I am no brigand to rob a man of his time. No, Franse, I shall be only too glad to pay well for such help as I am certain you can give me. So now no more about it. Do you see that castle above us? It has a curious legend attached to it, which, if you like, I will give you in brief while we rest and refresh ourselves."

"I shall listen most gladly," Charles replied. "I have passed many hours gazing at its ruins in a sort of mild wonder as to its history. Our hostess was one day about to give it to me, but only got as far as to say, 'It is the grand old Castle Alten Aar,' when she was called away, and the subject has never since been resumed."

"So much the better for me," rejoined the student, laughing. "I am fond of telling stories, so behold the Castle of Alten Aar, and prepare to listen to my tale. But I forgot, boy, you will be cold up here on the mountain side."

"Not I," Franse said, merrily. "I am warmly clad, while the sun shines with quite a spring like heat. Pray begin, for my curiosity is fast rising, as to what story clings around those walls which from this distance indicate a high degree of feudal magnificence."

"It was no doubt a grand place in 'ye olden time,'" responded the German. "Tradition makes it out remarkable both for strength and beauty. It was the home, so runs the tale, of a powerful family of lords and ladies, having been for many generations in their possession, but since the sad and tragic fate of Kurt, the last of his line, it has been left alone in its ruin and solitude. Kurt of Alten Aar, was the fearless defender of right, the denouncer of wrong, no matter against whomsoever his principles led him. He feared neither Church nor State, thus bringing upon him the enmity of both, because against the wickedness of both his denunciations were hurled.

"Thus he lived a stern warrior life, cheered only by his two lovely daughters, toward whom he was as gentle as toward wrong doers he

was fierce. Rowena, the eldest born, stately in her proud pale beauty of dazzling skin, raven hair, and eyes like night, loved the brave knight, her father, with a devotion none the less strong because it was silent.

"Ethelroin, the younger, lovely as a June rose, graceful as a fawn, nestled close in her father's heart, and there sang her happy roundelays like a summer bird. What wonder then that Kurt of Alten Aar doted on his fair daughters, guarding them with jealous care.

"At last he received in one day two letters from powerful neighboring nobles, demanding them in marriage.

"'Alas, alas!' he cried, 'I can never yield up my darlings to these rude and ruthless men. And yet it is not for me to compel their presence in this lonely castle. It is but right to leave the decision with them.'

"Tremblingly he laid the offers before the maidens, bidding each decide freely as her heart directed.

"Rowena indignantly cast the missive aside, exclaiming, 'Shall the daughter of the Count of Alten Aar mate with a robber?'

"Then his eyes rested full of pride and affection on his eldest born, but turned half fearfully toward Ethelroin.

"She threw herself upon his neck, and nestled her golden head upon his shoulder. 'Father,' she whispered, 'here is my home, let no one take me hence.'

"Then was the heart of Kurt glad, though he well knew the deadly feud in which this refusal would involve him. 'Better to die in my castle,' he cried, 'than see my children wed with the oppressors of their kind. Robbers, as thou, Rowena, hast justly called them.'

"Then tearing the letters in fragments, he delivered them to the messengers, bidding them return with all speed to their masters.

"No time was lost in making ready the castle for defense, but hardly was it rendered impregnable before it was surrounded. The brave Kurt gave free permission for any who chose to leave him, but all with one voice declared their determination to abide the result with their beloved master.

"The besiegers, well knowing how futile would be any attempt to subdue this strong-

hold by assault, decided to bide their time until famine should do its work upon the garrison.

"Thus weeks passed. No relief came, and Kurt saw himself, his followers, and above all his fair daughters, fast approaching the extremity so patiently awaited by their enemies. Once more he urged his vassals to go forth, and again they refused. Then a sally was attempted, but without success, so they determined to die rather than surrender, and endure the cruel fate they knew awaited them at the hands of their foes.

"One by one they dropped away. Fever added its horrors to their distress, while with almost supernatural strength the sisters nursed the sick, and ministered comfort to the dying. Even when reduced to mere phantoms of their former selves, they flitted from one sufferer to another, carrying blessing everwhere. To the last, they had ever a smile for Kurt, their father, until they one day sank at his feet, never more to rise. Then was he left alone, the only living being within his castle walls.

"'Now will I be free!' he cried. 'Even famine shall no longer bind me.'

"Covering his wasted form with his richest suit of armor, he descended to his stables, there finding his favorite horse, who neighed a welcome at sight of his beloved master, whom he had so often borne in battle and in the chase. This time he was to bear him beyond the reach of all earthly enemies.

"Mounting, the knight spurred his charger to the summit of his loftiest turret. His glittering armor flashed back the rays of an early morning sun. His white hair floated in the light breeze that lifted the plumes of his helmet, as he gazed down in stern defiance upon the warriors who watched him as if spell-bound.

"Every ear was strained to catch his words, as by a commanding waive of his hand he compelled their audience.

"'Behold,' he said, 'the last of man or beast that lives within these walls. Your allies, hunger and disease, have played you false, and have delivered us out of your cruel hands. I alone remain; but I too will be free!'

"Then he spurred his milk white charger

to the edge of the battlement. The noble animal affrighted, reared, but seeming suddenly to comprehend the will of him he had so long obeyed, he sprang forward and gave a leap into the air.

"Horror-stricken the besiegers gazed, as from rock to rock the steed and his rider bounded, until the waters of the Aar received and closed over Kurt, the last of his race.

"Silently from around the castle the awe-stricken warriors turned away, nor dared to invade the silence of those death-strewn halls. Never has mortal ventured within the walls since that sad day, so runs the tale."

"A brave legend, and bravely told," Franse said, when the German ended. "I shall write it out for the benefit of two fair ladies I left behind me in America."

"Would they be as true in their allegiance to anybody, think you, as were the knight's daughters to him?" questioned Herr Humbert.

"I believe them capable of it," Charles rejoined, "but they will hardly be tested. We live in more quiet times."

"True," rejoined Herr Humbert, "but none

the less trying for all that. Men and women now-a-days often get shut up in castles, so to speak, where for love of somebody not half so noble as our knight, they starve and sicken, until, besieged by inexorable circumstances, they waste away and die. I've seen it many a time, and so will you if you live long enough."

Franse made no answer, but remained grave and preoccupied on his way back to the cottage, which they were to leave on the next day.

CHAPTER X.

IT was well for the purse of our young traveler that he had met and pleased the friendly German, for when his reckoning at the cottage was paid he had barely sufficient money left to carry him to Leipsic.

Possibly Herr Humbert guessed as much, for before setting out for home he insisted on giving his new secretary a quarter's advance on his salary, which he had over night settled in his own mind at a figure far above anything he could prevail on Franse to accept.

"Never mind, I can raise it," he muttered in a dissatisfied undertone. "I can raise it when this squeamish boy finds how useful he can be to me." So he said no more, but devoted him-

self to the entertainment of his new protege as they journeyed toward Leipsic.

So perfect was his acquaintance with the many points of interest along the way, so great were his acquirements outside the direct line of his favorite studies, that Charles felt his wonder and admiration increasing every day. He came to regard the student as a walking encyclopedia of useful knowledge, and his mind so long absorbed in its private cares, revived in this new and most congenial atmosphere, as does the enfeebled body in the pure air and sunshine of heaven.

Arrived at the ex-Professor's house (for he had years before resigned his position in the University), Charles found himself a little disconcerted at the striking contrast it presented to his own home.

No second glance was needed to show him that the sweet ministry of woman was wanting; indeed must always have been wanting in this domicile, else its internal arrangements could never have become the *dis*-arrangements they now were.

From the street one entered almost without

ascent, a long hall extending through the house, where it opened upon a small paved court in the rear.

On one side the hall was the Professor's study, with his sleeping-room behind it. On the opposite side was a library, with another bed-room attached, which Charles was directed to appropriate to his own use.

The days were at the shortest, the cold was stinging, and twilight beginning to fall, but none of these things disturbed Herr Humbert's serenity, as he bestirred himself to build a fire in his far from polished stove.

Meanwhile the young stranger, half amused, half vexed at the discomfort about him, with visions of the warmth and good cheer to be found at some not far distant inn, stood viewing the chaos of things both rare and curious in the eyes of science, out of which he was expected to bring order. Shelves, tables, chairs, floor, were packed and strewn, layer upon layer, pile upon pile, that left no space for the accommodation of the human species, at least so far as revealed itself to an eye unused to the confusion.

The dim light struggling through the dingy

window-panes at first failed to show a little clearing at the far end of the room, where stood a chair and writing table comparatively empty, leading to which from the door where Charles remained was a narrow path just broad enough for a man to walk in. Around the stove, that already sent forth the genial heat and crackle of a hickory fire, was another oasis with a similar path leading into the grand highway already mentioned; but from his present standpoint Franse could not discover it, and as he turned toward the opposite room he wondered by what legerdemain his host had surmounted the barriers that seemed to interpose between himself and his heating apparatus.

If the one room was cumbered with specimens, the other was equally so with books, the floor in some places being heaped with them nearly to the ceiling. Whether, were they carefully arranged they would overflow the cases that lined the walls, and where now the king of confusion reigned right royally, was hardly to be determined at a glance; but stumbling on toward his own apartment the new comer was relieved to find it, though

plainly furnished, neat and in order. He could therefore give an affirmative answer to his host's "Will it do?" as he paused a moment in the doorway before lighting another fire in the library stove, which was so hidden behind a rampart of printed science, as to have entirely escaped the young man's notice.

Things began to look more hopeful in the pleasant warmth that soon spread itself through the rooms; but external heat, though grateful, requires the aid of those internal fires that in the case of our two travelers needed to be fed by a hearty supper. But where was it coming from, was Charles' unspoken thought, to which came a speedy answer from Herr Humbert, who said, "Now for Frau Herman and her dainties."

Drawing Franse's arm within his he led him into the hall, and to a door opening at the farther end into an extension that bounded the little court already mentioned, on one side.

The room they entered, though small, was cosily furnished and exquisitely neat. A bright fire danced merrily on the hearth, seemingly intent on rivaling with its ruddy glow the calm

shining of a tall bronze lamp, that through its semi-transparent shade dispensed a mellow, silvery light over the little table where it stood.

Here were the dainties, but Frau Herman was not to be seen.

Our friends cared little for this, however, being eager to satisfy their hunger, and for a time few words passed between them. At last, Charles found time to say, "Truly Frau Herman must be a born cook as we say in America. This supper is as excellent as it was unexpected."

"Poor boy! did he think he would be sent supperless to bed?" queried the German, laughing.

"Hardly that," returned Franse, "but I must confess I was at a loss to guess where it was coming from."

"Why, my dear fellow, I ordered this meal before I left home, six weeks ago. To be sure I did not then know you were coming back with me, but that happy event only made the difference of another knife and plate, which, as soon as the matter was decided I wrote to have laid for you."

"How could you be sure of the exact time of your return?" Charles asked in some surprise.

"I made my plans for it," his host replied. "Order and punctuality are my watchwords, especially the first," he added with a quizzical twinkle in his eye, seeing the amusement his guest failed to hide.

"Never you mind," he continued, "time and capacity only have been wanting to carry out my plans for the arrangement and classification of my collections. In Charles Franse I have secured both."

"Does Frau Herman never interest herself in the care of your rooms?" Charles asked.

"Interest herself!" echoed the German. "Indeed she does, or rather did until I threatened to throw every stone at her woman's head if she ventured to cross the threshold. Deliver me from the clearing up and setting to rights of a woman with a brush, pan, and duster! Why, boy, my choicest treasures would in her eyes be no better than rubbish fit only for the scavenger."

"You surely allow her to take care of your bed-room?" Charles asked, much diverted by the

intense disgust expressed in Herr Humbert's face.

"Not I!" he returned, contemptuously. "What beast that roams the forest but can make his own bed! and am I more helpless than they?"

"But do we not bed our horses, and care in various ways for the comfort of the animals about us?" urged Charles.

"Granted," replied the student, his keen eyes all aglow, "but they are enervated and enslaved by domestic life. An animal dependent on man is no animal, but a crouching, fawning sycophant, to be kicked or beaten at his master's pleasure."

Franse listened surprised at the half cynical tone in which Herr Humbert spoke, a tone so foreign to anything he had before noticed in him. He, however, laughingly declared his readiness to adopt the custom of the house, and become self reliant to the extent of making his own bed, though but for politeness' sake he would have suggested that consistency required them to dispense with the services of a cook as well as those of a chambermaid.

Just now he cared less who should make his bed than when he should be allowed to get into it; and Herr Humbert seeing his fatigue, sent him at once to the enjoyment of the rest he so greatly needed.

He slept late, waking to find the sun shining brightly and all the city up and doing. Losing no time before imitating their example, he was soon ready to join the ex-Professor, whom he found busy at his writing desk, where he always occupied himself from five o'clock till nine, summer and winter.

He welcomed Charles cordially, but yet there was wanting much of that genial vivacity which had so distinguished him hitherto.

"You are just in time for breakfast," he said, rising with a half sigh from the book in which he had been absorbed.

"I supposed the breakfast hour long passed," rejoined Charles, "and felt quite ashamed of my tardiness."

"Make yourself easy," his host replied, leading the way to the room where they had supped. "I never waste the precious hours of early morning by attention to my appetite. If

you are ready by nine it will be in ample season for me."

The meal was eaten in almost unbroken silence, Herr Humbert being apparently unable to free himself from the fit of abstraction which had so suddenly seized him. His companion was not sorry to be left to his own thoughts, which sprang with a quick rebound to Eau Claire, and the happy life he had led before the shadows came.

As yet he had written no word home since he left, save the one note to Mabel. Indeed, what had he to communicate either of comfort or hope, up to the time Herr Humbert found him at the Swiss cottage. Now his future was settled at least for a time. He would at once write Gretchen, and give her news of her twin brother in the city their father so loved, and where he was still remembered with reverent affection.

From this reverie he was aroused by Herr Humbert, who said, upon rising to leave the table, "I must be absent nearly all day, Franse. I am sorry to leave you alone, but possibly you will enjoy looking about the city,

and hunting up some of your father's old friends. I can direct you to a score or more who would delight to welcome you."

"Thank you, sir," Charles replied. "I do not care to go out to-day. I am anxious to begin at once on the work I have to do, unless perhaps you wish to superintend the classification of your collection."

"By no means," replied the student. "That is just what I prefer *not* to do. Because I saw in you a man who could relieve me of all that, doing it better than I could do it myself, I did my best to secure you. Make what disposition you please of the contents of those rooms, and if anything is needed for your assistance, it shall be provided."

"I will do my best to merit your confidence," Charles answered, "but you must criticise freely."

"To be sure, to be sure," was the answer, and Herr Humbert was out of the house and away, before Charles realized that he had left the room.

Thus deserted, his first care was to write the contemplated letter to his sister, a task

demanding more time and effort than he expected. It was by no means easy to write with his former unreserved affection, when almost every sentence must be made to conceal far more than it expressed.

He rose from the ordeal, weary and heart-sick, but resolved not to yield to despondency, he dispatched the letter, and began at once a vigorous examination of the chaos of scientific treasure committed to his charge.

CHAPTER XI.

LEAVING Charles thus worthily engaged, we will take charge of his letter to Gretchen, and guarding it carefully on its voyage, place it in her hand, as she sits in her pleasant chamber at Eau Claire.

Her lap is full of letters, and her eyes are full of tears. Yes, she is trying to still her hunger for news of her twin brother by giving it the scanty nutriment to be drawn from this exhausted store written her by him in days gone by. As she sprang up gladly to receive the new, the old letters fell to the floor. She pressed the fresh one to her lips, and tearing away the envelope, glanced rapidly over the contents.

Then she sat down and began again, this

time scanning each sentence carefully, until reaching the end she sighed heavily, saying, "Dear, dear Charley! what is it he is hiding from me?"

A gentle knock at the door preceded Mabel's entrance. "Good news, I trust, Gretchen,' she said. "I heard a letter had come from Charles, and I could not wait to know where and how he is."

Gretchen held out the letter, saying, "Read for yourself, Mabel, and tell me what you think."

Mabel gladly obeyed, while Gretchen eagerly watched her face while her eyes ran rapidly along the lines.

When she finished, she looked up with a bright smile, saying, "What a needless worry we have had, Gretchen. Another time, we will remember the old adage about 'no news being good news.' He seems to have at last reached the height of his ambition, association with science in its highest and most approved forms. We two lumps of feminine clay stand no chance beside that mass of scholarly matter over which he is to rule supreme."

Gretchen stooped to gather the letters at her feet, saying, as she did so, "Possibly you are right, Mabel, but to me there is—"

Just here a little voice at the door said, "I's tomin," and without further announcement, in walked baby Jennie. Two years and a little more of contact with this sublunary sphere, had bestowed on this young lady the chubby proportions in which she now appeared, but she had evidently had the arrangement of her present costume, which was singular to a degree.

The foundation of her apparel was evidently the dainty night-gown in which she had taken her mid-day nap. Possibly the blue socks had also accompanied her to dreamland, and on the way become damaged to the extent of letting one little toe appear uncovered on the present scene. Perhaps she there received the pattern which on waking, her baby hands had tried to carry out. Be that as it may, there rested on her golden curls one of those indescribable inventions of millinery art that are supposed to *grace* the heads of maid and matron, in this particular instance belonging to Miss Jennie's mamma.

Its beauty was at present enhanced by reversing the ordinary position of back and front, thus bringing the long white plumes directly over the bright, resolute eyes of the little wearer, through which they shone with calm seriousness, as if fully adequate to the importance of the occasion. A heavy mantilla trailed from the baby shoulders far behind upon the floor, being partially held in place by the little hand that grasped it firmly round the throat, while the other hid itself in a muff, that partly concealed a blue silk overskirt, which adorned the front as the mantilla did the back of this lilliputian lady.

"I's tome to tall," she repeated, in answer to the mirth her appearance excited. Then hearing her name called from behind, she sped as fast as her draperies permitted to the far side of a center table, bringing herself into position just as Mrs. Granger appeared at the door.

"I doesn't sink it's 'lite to make me wun so w'en I'se tallen!" she remarked gravely, with a nod that brought her hat quite over her eyes. Involuntarily she loosened her hold

upon the mantilla, which fell to the floor. The overskirt followed suit, when dropping the muff, both little hands seized the hat and tumbled it forward upon the table.

"I's takin off my sings. I's tome to 'tay," she explained with imperturbable gravity, utterly unruffled by this unexpected turn of affairs. "I dess I mus' sit down, tause I's vely tired, tause I's tome in 'e ocen in my barce tub all the way form 'Zan." Whereupon she climbed upon a large easy chair, and laid herself back as if much exhausted.

"Why, what a long voyage to make in a bath tub!" Mabel said, trying to speak soberly. "All the way from Lausanne, too! I declare! But we are very glad to see you, Miss Granges, and I hope you had a pleasant voyage."

"Pitty pesent," replied the small visitor. "I dess it's most dinner time, tause I's mos' 'tarve."

"If you will come with me, Miss Jennie, you shall have dinner served at once," said mamma. "I suppose you wish to change your traveling costume before you eat, and

therefore I will carry you up stairs." Saying which, she stooped to raise the wee traveler in her arms. She, however, resented the indignity, declaring that "ladies' mamma's didn't tarry 'em wen 'ey went talling."

She, however, allowed herself to be led away, promising to call again soon.

Mabel also was summoned elsewhere, and Gretchen was again alone.

How she blessed the unconscious baby that had prevented her yielding to a momentary impulse to open her heart to Mabel concerning her anxiety about Charles. As yet she had never betrayed her consciousness of their unexplained trouble, that like an east wind seemed to have set all the domestic harmonies in a jangle. Sorely as she was often tried by doubt and anxiety, she had firmly adhered to her resolve of patiently waiting in silence for a solution of the mystery. Any other course seemed false to the unbounded confidence hitherto existing between Charles and herself. Did she not well know some all-sufficient reason must exist to cause a withdrawal of it in the present case? Should

she not trust him still? But to-day her craving for a possible knowledge Mabel might possess, had well nigh overborne her resolve. Only baby Jennie had saved her from yielding.

She laid away the old letters, that had only saddened her by forcing upon her the happy past, in so strong contrast with the present; then with the new one close at hand, she opened her Bible and read, now and then pausing to write on the open page of a blank book that had already occupied her many hours since her return from abroad.

While in seeming Gretchen exhaled holiness as does the lily its fragrance, without voluntary effort, she was in reality ever busy strengthening and purifying the secret springs of her outward life, feeding them with the dew and sunshine of God's holy word and many a fervent prayer, as the hidden lily root is nourished by the dew and sunshine of heaven.

Day by day she now fortified her harrassed soul with the sweet promises of sympathy and love that lie so thick along the sacred pages, and when one came to her with unusual power she wrote it out, because so doing seemed to make

it more her own. Thus throwing herself into the arms of Almighty compassion she could endure, obey, aye, be at peace in the midst of doubt, perplexity and trial.

Even when Blakemere coming in threw himself irritably upon the sofa, exclaiming, "I declare, Gretchen, you are enough to drive one mad. Here I just met that prig of an Allison on the street, and what must he do but stop me with, 'Good morning, sir. I hope Mrs. Blakemere did not get too tired yesterday with her long walk? Those poor people will never forget her kindness in coming,' and there I stood as ignorant of what the old ass meant, as if he had not been speaking of my own wife. I took it for granted he had in mind another of your secret missions to some den of iniquity or other."

Even then, there was only loving gentleness in her tone as she said, —

"Don't call them *secret* missions, Philip, as though I wanted to hide them from you. I only went yesterday because one of my Sunday class had been dangerously hurt and wanted to see me. I could not consult you for you was not

here, beside I had no doubt of your approval. At night you brought home a friend, who stayed till late. This morning you seemed much preoccupied, and hurried away from breakfast, to your business, so that I had no opportunity to mention the subject. Beside, dear Philip," she added, putting back the hair from his brow, and looking firmly but lovingly into his wavering eyes, "I did not think it mattered. If I cannot be safely left to my own judgment in the ordinary affairs of life, I am not fit to be Philip Blakemere's wife."

"I don't think any woman is fit to be my wife who disregards my expressed wishes," he answered angrily, his eyes turning restlessly from one point to another, anywhere but to Gretchen's.

"Have I ever done so, Philip?" she asked, still patiently.

"Well, you surely know I don't approve of your exposing yourself as you do with your teachings and charities, and goodness only knows what. I want you to keep in a lady's place, and leave these things to old maids and widows. It's all they're fit for."

"Perhaps next time you will have leisure to go with me," she said, pleasantly, "then you will see that there is work not only for old maids and widows but for strong men and their wives, such as you and me. But never mind now," she continued. "Here is a letter from dear Charley. Shall I read it to you?"

"No, you can tell me if it contains anything I need to know," he replied. "Probably the details have less interest for me than you."

For an instant Gretchen's eye flashed and her lip quivered; but Blakemere was not looking at her. Indeed he rarely looked at her now, except for a glance, quickly withdrawn. She refolded the letter without speaking, but presently regaining self-command, she told him in brief the principal points of interest it contained. He listened in silence, and then took up a book pretending to read until the dinner bell sounded, which came as a welcome interruption to both.

So far Gretchen had borne the bitter change that had come over her domestic life with a singular blending of patient meekness and fearless dignity. As yet, she had never retorted

when goaded by the harsh words now fast becoming familiar to her ear. Her forbearance toward her husband seemed like that of a guardian angel toward the erring mortal over whom he is appointed to watch.

As for Blakemere, there seemed always a struggle going on in his mind that left him not one tranquil moment.

At times he lavished upon Gretchen an excess of devotion as if to atone for the waywardness of his frequent conduct.

At others the bare sight of her seemed to irritate him beyond control, and her lightest word would then provoke from him the most captious fault-finding.

Mabel Flopstock watched the pair with indignant pity for the one, and doubly indignant scorn for the other.

Gretchen's longsuffering often drew forth some not over gentle comment on her lack of spirit, while she applied the lash all the more vigorously to Philip, because he escaped so utterly unwhipped by Gretchen herself.

Lottie Granger laughingly shut her eyes to everybody's troubles and faults, so far as pos-

sible, while she danced along like a merry brooklet, whose song rings all the more blithely for the impediments over and around which it glides.

If she ever shook her head or gave a sigh at the grievous change that had come over the cottage life since her childish days, it was in the solitude of her own chamber, with no witness but baby Jennie, whose serious eyes often expanded in wonder, at the sudden way her young mamma would overwhelm her with hugs and kisses, exclaiming, "*Papa Ned* is good, and kind, and jolly, isn't he, pet?" to which the infant umpire made answer by kissing back, and saying, "I dess papa Ned be dood boy, tause we love 'im bushel. Me want to tiss him." This affectionate impulse necessitated the drawing forth of a little painting on ivory, that always hid away on mamma's white neck, just below the lace at her throat, and no wonder the child loved the picture of papa Ned; with its ruddy skin, soft blue eyes, and curling hair, and beard of golden brown, all of which would have been very effeminate but for a mouth and chin of ex-

traordinary firmness. Perhaps he had never come so near having a rival in baby Jennie's affections as now. Dr. Allison, with his stories and frolics, was making daily inroads upon her little heart, for which his frequent presence at the cottage afforded ample opportunity. Since the Blakemeres' return his previous acquaintance had fast warmed into friendship for all the inmates of the cottage, exclusive of Philip, between whom and himself there was mutual repulsion, their intercourse never getting beyond the utmost civility. Yet Blakemere still retained sufficient sense of what was due the life-long inmates of the home into which marriage had so recently admitted him, not to oppose their wishes on insufficient ground.

Neither Gretchen nor Lottie took any pains to hide their cordial approval of the doctor; they saw visions and dreamed dreams, in which both he and Mabel took the most prominent part.

It is no business of ours who else had like dreams and visions; but this much we may state, that Dr. Allison, an earnest man, doing

an earnest work that brought him into close contact with almost every form of suffering, had no time for trifling.

Yet was he keenly alive to the unrest, nay, more, the sometimes bitterness of Mabel's spirit. What made him so he did not stop to inquire. It was his instinct, alike by nature and training, to relieve suffering wherever he found it. To do this, he must know its peculiarities, therefore he made Mabel a study, and few men could do so without yielding to her manifold attractions both of mind and heart. That she was often captious, only increased his interest.

These moods were to him only symptoms of the malady he wanted to cure; a malady which at first wholly mental, was continually acting upon the nervous power in such a way as to render it morbidly sensitive and irritable.

Nor was Gretchen overlooked. Watching her closely week by week, the doctor saw that despite her cheerful serenity, something was rapidly giving her a pallor and feebleness distressing to him, both as a friend and a

physician. Yes, whatever skeleton lurked in the cottage cupboard, its presence was fast becoming visible to his observant eye through the havoc it was silently making among its inmates.

Of course the gossips of Eau Claire had many a sweet morsel to roll under their tongues regarding matters at the cottage, while a less number of kindly folk maintained either that all was well, or in any event, not much amiss with these children of the still beloved and honored dead.

Thus stern winter wearied on, telling his beads of frost in the long starlight, or anon shedding bright tear-drops in the midday sun, until, like the ministry of love, soft winds came down, and behold, he was transformed into gentle spring.

Lottie still lingered. Business still bound Mr. Granger at Madison, and though longing for him sadly, the bright, affectionate little woman shrank from leaving Eau Claire, where she well knew her presence was a blessing to both Mabel and Gretchen.

"Good morning, ladies," said Dr. Allison,

coming in one morning just as the family were leaving the breakfast table. "My apology for this early call lies in these complimentary tickets to what promises to be a very fine concert."

"It must be wonderful," Lottie exclaimed merrily, "if it takes all those pieces of cardboard to admit a forlorn bachelor like you, doctor."

"You see, my dear madam," Allison returned, "the managers of this affair had more compassion for me than you have, putting me exactly on an equality with the happy men of family, and now, in return for your unkindness, I want you to consider yourself as belonging especially to me for the evening."

"Dear me, how magnanimous!" she returned, gayly. "I begin to feel the coals burn already. Come Mabel, why don't you say something provoking. Perhaps you might get a share of the same disinterested benevolence."

"Both she and Mrs. Blakemere shall have it gratis," laughed the doctor. "I came here on purpose to invite you all to go with me. I seldom have a chance for anything of the sort,

and I want to make this a rare treat for myself. I wish I could persuade Mr. Blakemere to be one of the party, provided you ladies accept."

Philip's lip curled as he replied, with an air of careless indifference, "You know, Doctor, neither my wife nor I care for the sort of music one hears at these concerts. I presume she will prefer remaining at home. Possibly the rest may find it to their taste."

"That could hardly be," Mabel said in her scornful way, "after the rare advantages we have latterly enjoyed; but our civility, though hardly learned from the same source, compels us to accept your kind invitation with many thanks. No doubt Lottie and I will go with pleasure."

"Oh, yes indeed!" chimed in the merry little sister. "I shall enjoy it of all things, and perhaps Philip and Gretchen will go just to please us. They can tell us what to admire and what not to, you know."

"I certainly thank you for my share in your kind plan," Gretchen said, in her sweet, firm tones. "Possibly I may persuade my liege lord into dividing with you the responsibility of

escorting such a troublesome trio as my sisters and myself."

"I can manage it, though I hope Blakemere will conclude to endure it for our sakes," the doctor replied, pleasantly, as he bowed himself out, and went away to his patients.

In nothing was Gretchen's exquisite tact more clearly shown than in her skillful avoidance of even appearing as a martyr to her husband's humors. None ever heard her sigh. Her face was never clouded. If she shed tears they fell in secret. For Philip she had only smiles, yet were they so adroitly managed as never to seem out of sympathy with the occasion. From her, he had never borne the shadow of a reproach. The steady light of her love shed its brightness all along the devious, inexplicable way where he so strangely wandered; making ever easy his return to the green pastures and still waters where during the first weeks of her marriage Gretchen had thought they were always to dwell. Looking back to them now they seemed to her far away and shadowy, like a bright dream, so very bright in contrast with the present sombre reality.

Gretchen's perfect self-poise, and unvarying equanimity were marvelous to both Mabel and Lottie, well knowing as they did the strength of her emotions. They often talked of it in confidence wonderingly, ignorant or heedless of the key afforded by these words: "THOU *strengthenest me with strength in my soul.*" It was due neither to native amiability nor indifference, neither to inborn dignity nor pride of character. Gretchen stayed her soul on God, and he abundantly fulfilled to her the promises with which his word abounds.

Dr. Allison was no sooner gone than Blakemere sprang up, angrily exclaiming, "If you think to inveigle me into going to that miserable concert, Gretchen, just to please Allison, you are mistaken. He must be a dolt to suppose any of us want to be bored by it. But no doubt he judges of our musical taste by his own."

Gretchen looked at him playfully and said, "Well, Philip, the only thing that will inveigle me into staying at home, is for you to remember and bring that new duett we are to learn. Then you must stay and sing it with me all the

evening. Ten to one if the Doctor hears us he will forget to go."

"Don't you believe that, Mabel," cried Lottie. "Allison will care no more for these sirens when he has the delightful prospect of escorting *me* and *my* sister to a concert than his pointer does for the singing of your canary. And by the way, Philip," she went on, "please call at the express office on your way down town and tell them to be sure to deliver my dog just the moment he arrives."

"*Your* dog!" Mabel exclaimed in amazement. "What do you mean?"

"I mean *my* dog," answered the little lady, a trifle embarrassed by her sister's tone. "The way of it is this. I had a letter some time ago from Tom Dent, saying he had a beautiful Pointer pup that he wanted my husband to have (you know they are great friends), only he could contrive no way to get it to him. I wrote back to send it to me (it is only twenty miles you know), and I would take it on when I went back. So yesterday came a letter saying the poor thing would be here to-day, and if Philip will see about it, I will be much

obliged." Blakemere, contrary to all expectation, burst out laughing in a hearty way it did Gretchen good to hear.

"Well, Lottie," he said, "if you manage to get that dog to Wisconsin, just out of love to Granger, you'll give him about as strong a proof of feminine affection as could be devised. My opinion is, you have not much idea what you've undertaken. But I'll go to the office;" saying which he went away.

Mabel looked vexed; but Gretchen, only anxious to remove Lottie's perturbation at what for the first time appeared to look like a mistake, began to plan for the comfort of this canine guest. Presently she drew Lottie away in search of baby Jennie, with whom they went to select an agreeable spot wherein to bestow master Pointer on his arrival.

CHAPTER XII.

POOR LOTTIE! It must be confessed she had become very nervous about the expected arrival. There was in her mind a strange mingling of dread and curiosity, which but for the concert would have made it hard for her to sustain her usual merry role.

This, however, gave her an opportunity for much sly bantering of Mabel, who ashamed to manifest the more than ordinary irritation that possessed her, bore her sister's raillery without retort, until exasperated by a sharper thrust than usual, she exclaimed, angrily, "Well, really, Lottie, one would think your mad-cap spirits were running away with you. Between your dog and your jesting there will be no living with you presently."

This rebuke coming from Mabel, in whom she stood somewhat in awe, filled up the measure of Lottie's disquietude. In the old happy days before her marriage harsh words were as rare at the cottage as in the time of the dear Herr Professor and his sister Gretchen. But now, alas! nothing seemed the same. Charles was gone; Mabel so altered; Gretchen grown so heavenly good poor Lottie hardly dared touch the hem of her garment, and Blakemere the interloper, either as cross as two sticks or so superciliously indifferent she longed to box his ears. The contrast flashed before her mind almost before she had time to bury her face in her hands and burst out crying.

Baby Jennie dropped her playthings and gazed for a minute in open-eyed astonishment. Then went waddling as fast as her little fat legs would carry her to Mabel's side, and dealt her such a blow with her chubby fist as gave evidence of a good share of baby strength. Her miniature wrath was so comical that but for pride Mabel would have laughed aloud. As it was, she caught the little hand, while the child looked defiantly in her face. Lottie was too

busy with her sudden grief to notice this pantomime, and after a moment baby Jennie snatched her hand away, and running to her mamma put her chubby arms about her neck, murmuring, "I's 'ou itte girl. I loves 'ou busel."

Just here Gretchen came in, and seeing Lottie in tears, began with real concern to inquire the cause.

"Why, I suppose I hurt her feelings," Mabel said shortly. "I told her what with her dogs and her nonsense, she was getting unendurable."

"Dear me, Lottie, never cry for that," Gretchen said, cheerily. "Of course Mabel didn't mean a word of it. She knows your nonsense is worth double the half of what passes for sense, and as to the dog, he won't have been here a week before she will want him for her own. And here he comes now, I verily believe," she exclaimed.

Lottie caught baby Jennie in her arms, dashed away her tears, and ran into the hall just as Blakemere entered with a chain in his hand by which he was leading the Pointer pup.

"I've got him, Lottie," he said, evidently in

great good humor. "He's a perfect beauty! I declare, I wish he was mine! He is as hungry as a bear, though," he added, hurrying him through the house to his temporary kennel, in the side yard. Gretchen and Lottie followed, anxious to see what manner of beast was here; while Elra brought a plate of tempting morsels that vanished like flies before a hungry toad.

It must be confessed the ladies could see but little beauty in master Pointer, aside from his large, dark, intelligent eyes and a coat of silky brown hair, that on his long ears became soft and glossy as the daintiest satin. But his little fat body resting on four very short legs was not a model of grace. He had seen, however, but six weeks of canine existence, and Blakemere assured them his figure would improve with age.

With him had come a letter to Lottie from Tom Dent, commending the precious quadruped to her tenderest care. He also bespoke her patience for him if he cried a little for his mother, as was but natural at first. This appeal aroused her mother-heart and made her resolve that come what would she would act a mother's

part toward him. That the difference of species would make her task perplexing did not at first occur to her. "Where there is a will there is a way." But alas, even proverbs sometimes fail when applied to every day affairs.

Master Pup was evidently much excited by his novel experiences, and felt by no means ready to accept the attentions of well meaning ladies in exchange for those of his absent parent. Howls, yelps, barks, whines bore expressive testimony to the *doggedness* of his resolve, until yielding to Philip's advice they left him alone, hoping he would go to sleep. No such happy result followed however; and the luckless family ate their sorrowful evening bread amid such discords of sound as seldom tried their music-loving ears.

Philip made sport of it, while Gretchen, happy in the rare light of his amiability was ready to endure a dozen yelping puppies if need be. Only Mabel frowned, and proposed "the thing" should be sent back to Tom Dent, forthwith; which proposition drew forth a general protest.

After tea, Gretchen proposed making his dog-

ship one of the family circle assembled in the drawing-room for the hour before Dr. Allison would come to take them to the concert. This plan evidently met with canine approval, master Pup having learned in solitude the value of even human society.

It must be confessed his manners were somewhat boisterous, as is apt to be the case in extreme youth, but finally exhaustion got the better of him and he sought repose — alas, for poor Lottie! — beneath the soft drapery of Mabel's flowing skirt. Here, close to her slippered feet he must lie. No other place would do. Falling blissfully asleep, he uttered short, quick barks, that acted upon Mabel much like an electric shock, yet she bore it with a kind of contemptuous patience, determined not again to offend the little sister.

All parties were much relieved when Allison came; and as Blakemere had unexpectedly determined to escort his wife to the concert, just for the sport of it, the party was soon under way, leaving poor Dash (for so they agreed to call him) to the solitude of his kennel.

The first freshness of Spring was upon all

things. The scent of springing grass and bursting leaf-buds was in the soft air. The holy twilight tints were slowly fading from the western sky, while the early moon hung low over the eastern hills. As Mabel walked beside Dr. Allison, the very tones of whose voice had a power of soothing in them, she felt the softening influences all about her.

Her moods grew more gentle; and though she was silent, leaving the conversation to Lottie, Allison looking in her face, saw that its expression was less proud, and when he heard her voice in reply to some trifling remark, he detected a corresponding change in its tone.

Upon reaching the concert room, it was discovered that two of the five seats were directly forward of the other three. These were at once assigned to the Blakemeres, Lottie declaring that Philip should not sit behind her where he could freely pour his criticisms into her ears. "You and Mabel shall sit behind them and I will come next," she arranged, "for then Philip will turn his head from me when he speaks to Gretchen, and I shan't hear what he says. I'm not going to have all my comfort spoilt by him,

I can tell you." Thus Mabel had the corner seat behind Gretchen, the doctor coming between her and Lottie.

The opening overture was followed by that musical gem from Lurline, "Sweet Spirit, hear my Prayer." The rendering was almost faultless, and the pleading, persuasive notes were to Mabel as the utterance of her longing soul, seeking help from the only being to whom she turned with her wayward heart-sickness, her own precious, sainted mother.

The tears were coming. She was powerless to control the rush of feeling thus aroused. Despite her pride, the unfitness of time and place, her dread of what Dr. Allison would think, Mabel was weeping violently. As he felt the trembling of her slight figure, and just caught the sound of her smothered sobs, the doctor rejoiced that he had her in the corner, where she might escape the observation of their own party. As for himself, he was apparently unconscious of anything but the music that floated on and on into silence, leaving the audience too enraptured even to applaud.

The next selection was of a wholly different

character, giving Mabel time to recover self-command and hide her flushed face behind a friendly vail. Presently Allison turned to her with some slight remark, and gradually drew her attention to the leader of the orchestra, a short man, with a short neck, long flowing hair and beard to match, bright eyes that flew from side to side as he waved his baton, and bowed now here now there, with all the emphasis of which his small body was capable.

Seen through the medium of the doctor's droll comments the little man was grotesque enough, and Allison was enjoying his success in making Mabel laugh merrily, when an usher hurried to him with what seemed an important message.

"Has Oakes been sent for?" Lottie heard Allison ask.

"Yes," replied the usher, "but the man says he is gone. Beside, he says the poor fellow begged hard for you as soon as he could speak."

"This is too bad!" exclaimed the doctor, turning to Mabel. "Here I am called to somebody who is badly hurt. I see no way for me but to go, yet how can I leave you ladies?"

"Oh, never mind us. Of course you must

go," Mabel said. "It is too bad, though, and I am very sorry."

Allison bent forward and explained the necessity to Blakemere; then turning back to Mabel he said playfully, "I never thought to act the part of a Conrad Werner, by escorting you somewhere and then taking myself off without seeing you safe home."

"The cases are hardly parallel," she replied, "beside you may return before the concert is over."

"I will if possible," he answered, and was gone.

Of course the evening's enjoyment was seriously marred by this interruption; at least for the two especially dependent on the doctor's escort, and though even Blakemere could not deny that the concert was exceptionally fine, Mabel was glad when it came to an end.

The doctor had not returned, so the party made the best of their way home without him.

Lottie was glad to find both her baby and her dog quietly asleep, a blissful state into which she herself quickly passed, after the fatigues and worries of the day. The clock was

just striking two when she suddenly awoke to the dreadful consciousness that dismal sounds were issuing from the kennel in the yard.

For a while she lay still and listened. She wondered if Mabel was awake and listening also. Then she bethought herself of an invalid girl in the next house, whose slumbers were sure to be thus disturbed.

She must certainly do something to put a stop to this howling; so she got up, and having partly dressed, went down as noiselessly as possible, her great dread being lest she should meet Mabel.

She however reached the kennel in safety, and unfastened the chain, thinking to bring her inconvenient charge to her own room until morning.

The poor animal, overjoyed at even a woman's presence in his distress, yelped forth his delight, at the same time giving such a bound that the chain slipped from Lottie's hand. No sooner did he realize his freedom than he darted through the half open gate, and down the street at a rate that bid defiance to poor Lottie's utmost speed. She still followed however,

regardless of everything in her dismay, but the hope of at least keeping the provoking thing in sight.

She soon found this impossible in the dim moonlight that was now obscured by thin clouds. She stood still trying to think what she had best do. She could not bring herself to go home and leave the truant puppy to his fate. In the midst of her quandary she heard approaching footsteps; and seized with sudden fear at her unusual position alone upon the street in the dead of night, she began walking rapidly toward home.

Nevertheless the steps gained upon her, until yielding to her alarm she ran with all her might, and had just reached her own yard when she heard her name. The voice sounded like Dr. Allison's, and she waited for him to come up, when to her relief she found it was him. Better still, he was leading Dash.

"O doctor!" she exclaimed, all out of breath and shaking from head to foot. "I'm so glad it is you!" How did you happen to catch him?"

"He ran into me," Allison answered. "I thought how it was, though I hardly expected to meet you too, abroad."

"Why, Doctor, what ails you?" asked Lottie, suddenly. "Your voice sounds very strangely. Are you sick?"

"Oh, no," he replied. "I have been a good deal tried by the case to which I was called. That is all. I shall be in to-morrow. Can I do anything further for you?"

"No, thank you," Lottie answered. "I'm going to take this nuisance up to my room till morning."

"Good night, then," he said, and passed on, leaving the worried little lady to make the best of her way back to her chamber with her troublesome charge.

Here in a snug corner she improvised a soft bed close to her own, which appeared perfectly acceptable to his canine tastes. Then she laid her weary body to rest, in the hope that her troubles were ended at least for the night.

Again she slept, and dreamed of running to overtake her husband, who suddenly changed into a brown puppy, waving a baton and making profound bows, when, with a scream and a bound, she found herself in the middle of the floor. Oh, what was the matter! For a moment

she could not imagine, until by the light of her night lamp, she saw master Dash with his fore paws on her pillow, his silky brown head cocked on one side, while his bright eyes looked out at her from between those satin ears in evident amazement at the commotion. In an outburst of canine gratitude at being rescued from that dismal kennel, he had arisen to give his kind mistress a kiss of affection. How was he to know that his black nose was wet, and cold as ice? His mother never told him so.

"Oh, if the thing were only back where he came from!" Lottie exclaimed, ready to cry with vexation. But no, she would not give up the point so, after what both Mabel and Philip had said. The dog would learn better by and by. She would keep him for papa Ned, if she had to watch with him every night for a week. And watch she did through most of this night at least. She felt repaid, however, when upon meeting the family at breakfast, she found that they had not been disturbed.

Philip was in good spirits, Gretchen unaffectedly happy, and Mabel more herself than for some time previous.

"I imagine Allison will be in to-day to explain his non appearance," Blakemere remarked. "The case must have been an urgent one, to keep him so long."

Lottie kept her own counsel, like the wise little woman she was.

"Well, I must own he gave us a treat last night," Philip went on. "'Twas such a pity he could not enjoy it himself!"

"So it was," replied Gretchen; "suppose, to make amends, you bring him home to dine, and show him the curiosities we gathered abroad. You know he has often spoken of examining them, but the right time never seemed to come for you to show them."

"Very well; so be it, my beauty," Blakemere said, kissing his wife. Then catching baby Jennie he tossed her about till she shouted for glee, and ran to the window to watch him as he went away to the bank.

Oh, how bright the cottage seemed for this flash of genial sunshine! How the loving words nestled in the young wife's heart and sang to her all day long!

If, as has been admirably said, "Politeness is

real kindness kindly expressed," how shall we define its opposite, that so often casts its blight over what might otherwise be a happy home life.

Blakemere called at the doctor's office on his way down, but finding him out was obliged to defer his invitation till later. Arrived at the bank, he found his uncle, who greeted him with, "What do you think of the news, Philip?"

"What news, sir?" he replied.

"Why, about Werner. Just think of his venturing back here, and then getting himself killed before we had time even to see him."

The old gentleman was not surprised that Philip was just then absorbed with his rubbers, so that his face was hidden, nor that going to put them away in a closet, he lingered while he said, "I have heard nothing of it, uncle."

"Why, how's that?" Mr. Blakemere asked, half impatiently. "They said Allison was with you at a concert when he was called to him,"

"That may be," Philip said, still busy in the closet. "We went to a concert together, and he was called out, but we didn't know to whom.

He did not come back, nor have I seen him since."

"Well, they say," the old gentleman continued, "that Werner came back in disguise to see his mother, and just as he left the cars he managed to get run over and so badly hurt that he only lived a few hours. They carried him into the station and sent for Allison. When he got there he saw there was no help for the poor fellow; so he had him carried to his mother's, and staid by him till he died."

Philip made no answer. He was very busy in the closet. Did he realize the change that had come over his face? Would his uncle notice it if he came out into the morning light?

"They say he made a clean breast of it to Allison," continued his unconscious uncle. "I wonder how Franse would like that? But never mind. I bear him no ill will now he is dead and gone. I shall go to the funeral, for his mother's sake." With which charitable declaration he left the room without ever thinking that his remarks had not drawn a single response from his nephew.

CHAPTER XIII.

AS Philip predicted, Dr. Allison called during the morning, but his manner was so constrained, nay, almost embarrassed, that the ladies were much perplexed.

"We were very sorry you lost the concert, doctor," Gretchen said. "I can hardly tell you how much we all enjoyed it."

"That patient must have been a hard hearted one," said Lottie, after waiting a moment for the doctor to speak. "If it is anybody I know, I'm going to give him or her a good scolding for keeping you away from us all the evening, and making you lose such a treat."

"Who was it?" Mabel asked.

"Is it possible you have not heard?" Allison replied, in evident surprise.

"We have heard nothing," Gretchen said; "we have seen nobody to-day."

"Well, I am sorry to be the first to tell you that I was called to poor Werner."

"Not George Werner!" Mabel exclaimed, turning pale.

"Yes. He came back by stealth, to bid his aged mother good bye, before going to California, and just as he left the cars he was struck by an engine running on a side track. Nothing could be done for him, and he only lived a few hours."

"O doctor, how dreadful!" Lottie exclaimed. Gretchen and Mabel were silent.

At last Gretchen asked, "Did he see his mother?"

"Yes, we carried him home," replied Allison.

"How long did he live?"

"Till after midnight."

"Who was with him?" inquired Mabel.

"No one but his mother and myself."

"Was he conscious of his condition?" Gretchen asked.

"Perfectly so, till almost the last."

"Was he very much distressed at the thought of death?" she continued.

"Oh, do not ask me. I can't talk about it," he exclaimed, starting up and walking the room in uncontrollable agitation.

"Forgive me, doctor," Gretchen said, soothingly. "It must be a painful subject, and I was very thoughtless to press it. Let us say no more about it. Philip will be in very soon. He promised to come home early if you agreed to dine with us."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Blakemere," Allison said, suddenly seized with a hurry to be gone. "I cannot possibly stay."

"Didn't my husband see you on his way to the bank?" she asked, in surprise.

"No, I have not seen him to-day."

"Then you did not get our invitation to dinner! I am very sorry."

"You are very kind," he said, "but my business is such to-day I can not possibly come."

"Are you quite sure you can't stay?" urged Lottie. "There is Philip coming now."

"No, I thank you. Indeed I can't," he said hurriedly, and seizing his hat he left the room almost without saying good morning.

He hurried to the street door, hoping to escape before Blakemere came up, but he was a moment too late, and they met face to face. For an instant they looked at each other without speaking. Only an instant, but the look was as an electric wire between their souls over which flashed a question and its answer.

"Do you not dine with us to-day, doctor?" Blakemere said, letting his eyes fall, while the color mounted to his forehead and then went back leaving him many shades paler than usual.

"Not to-day, thank you," Allison said; and with a "good morning" went quickly away.

Philip passed into the house, and one glance showed his wife that he was in his worst possible humor. As usual he turned the full force of it upon her in fault-finding or ridicule until even her patience was nearly exhausted.

She mentioned what the doctor had told them about Werner, to which Philip listened eagerly, until she said, "He seemed very much overcome. It was strange to me that a man so familiar with such scenes should feel so keenly about a comparative stranger." Then he exclaimed, savagely, between his teeth, "Confound the man!"

Gretchen looked at him in astonishment, and he suddenly stopped, caught up a paper, threw himself back in his chair and began to read.

Gretchen had long since given up trying to account for her husband's conduct. She felt herself hopelessly involved in mystery regarding the two who were nearest and dearest to her on earth; but she prayed for faith to leave it all with God. She tried not to struggle; not to distract her mind with vain conjectures. She said, "I will wait patiently till God lets me know."

Not so Mabel. She was now in her chamber, turning over and over in her own mind this new link in what she believed to be a complete chain of circumstances, reaching from Charles' return to the bank as cashier, to the present time. How her head and heart ached, with trying to make something out of the isolated facts that lay few and far between, along the wide field of conjecture over which she vainly wandered. Gretchen and Mabel were alike at sea among their doubts, with neither chart nor compass; but while the one had ever her eyes lifted to the heavens for help,

the other kept hers persistently on the waves. For Gretchen, there was always a "Peace, be still," but Mabel chose to breast the storm alone.

What wonder, then, that she was impatient when Lottie asked her opinion about the choice of an embroidery pattern for baby Jennie's summer sacque, while Gretchen, to whom the little mother afterward went for advice, entered into every curve and angle of the design, as though braiding was the sole object of her life.

Lottie's two babies, biped and quadruped, were becoming fast friends, and a pretty sight they were together. The second evening of Dash's sojourn at the cottage, found him curled up in his comfortable bed near Lottie's, with baby Jennie sitting on the floor beside him. With one little soft hand she patted his brown head, while she sang to a tune of her own composing, "S'eep, baby, s'eep."

Her other hand was on her plump little knee, that just peeped out from under her night-gown, as did also a rosy little foot. Her face was bent toward the dog, and over it fell the

rings of golden hair. Gretchen thought it was a picture for an artist's pencil. Lottie did'nt think about the artist, but she knew it was a pretty sight, and wished papa Ned were there to see.

At last the child got up with great caution, and coming to Lottie, whispered,—

"I's dot him fast to seep, mamma, now I's doin to tay my p'ayer and do in my bed."

She knelt down, and folding her hands reverently, repeated, "Now I lay me down to sleep," without mistake; then, as usual, she said, "Pease bess papa Ned," and almost instantly added, "and dear Dod pease make unky Pillit a dood boy, so he toss baby Jennie tome more to-morrow."

There were tears in Gretchen's eyes as she kissed the little one good-night; and afterward Lottie had a hearty cry that nobody knew anything about, but you and I, dear reader.

I wish I could record that puppy Dash remained all night in the state of quiet where baby Jennie left him, but alas! truth compels me to state that his mistress' slumbers were exceedingly fragmentary. Still she would

rather watch a week, than yield her point, or have anybody lose a wink of sleep on account of what they considered her folly; but during these night watches, her brain conceived a plan for future relief, that she carried out next day, unaided and alone.

In the shed-chamber, where she had played away so many, happy, childish hours, was a large box, which by dint of expending much time, strength and patience, she succeeded in carrying to her room, unseen. In this she intended her puppy should sleep, till such time as he could reasonably be expected to return to his kennel and behave like a sensible dog. She grew so pleased with her plan, that she was impatient for the night, that she might test it. At last the hour came. Baby Jennie was asleep, and with stern determination she put Dash in his box, upon his soft bed of fragrant hay. He was very submissive, and curled himself down without resistance, though from my knowledge of the race I have no doubt a close observer would have detected a roguish twinkle in his eye.

Over the box Lottie proceeded to lay the slats

she had prepared, and upon these some chairs to keep them down, should the prisoner attempt to escape. She considered the arrangement singularly happy, as it permitted him to look out freely and feel himself in company, while it kept him in place.

The night was warm, and Lottie, heated with her unusual labors, was glad to join her sister in the music-room, from whence the rich tones of Gretchen's voice had been coming to her ears for the last half hour.

Blakemere, too morose to sing with his wife, lay upon a sofa, and Lottie stole quietly in to an easy chair by the window, prepared for a season of quiet enjoyment.

Gretchen's voice was always rich and soulfull; but now it went forth into the twilight, as if uttering all the pent up emotions of her heart.

"I declare, Gretchen, you surpass yourself to-night," Philip exclaimed, charmed out of his moodiness by the irresistible admiration she awoke in him.

"Then come and sing our new duett," she said, hardly expecting he would comply.

He went, however; and they were just beginning to mingle their voices, when there came a loud crash. All paused to listen, looking toward the door, at which almost immediately Sir Dash appeared, every hair on his round body seeming to curl with triumph over his gay little mistress.

There was no help for it, she must explain; when in the midst of this trying ordeal, baby Jennie stood in the door with serious, frightened eyes, and said, "Why, mamma! *it tundered!*"

CHAPTER XIV.

LOOKING in upon Charles Franse, we find him sitting by the open window of his bed-room at Herr Humbert's. We had almost said he was enjoying the spring sunshine, but that would hardly be true, as he was thinking nothing about it. He was absorbed in reading an abstruse book, from among the many that now stood arranged in clean and orderly ranks upon the student's library shelves. Since we first went with him into the German's rooms, they have undergone a marked change. He now rejoices in an admirable ordering and classification of the treasures that then cumbered his floor. His study walls are lined with shelves and cases, where the rarest of them

are placed, and his writing table often resounds with the rap he gives it as he glances up at them, and exclaims, "Didn't I tell you so, Henrich Humbert? I knew the boy had it in him."

Yes, the work young Franse had come to do, was almost finished. He had given himself to it with an energy he always showed in anything he took in hand, yet there had also been time for much study of the books, among which he found every prominent work on science in its various departments. Philosophy and metaphysics also abounded, beside an excellent selection of History and Belle Lettres, but in all the house there was no Bible, nor a single work that could be called religious.

Led on at first by curiosity to know the thoughts that had so strongly influenced the human mind, Charles read on until he became fascinated by reasoning, at once so novel to anything he had before met, and so subtile as to gain a powerful hold of him before he was aware that he was more than entertained.

Deprived of the happy companionship he

had hitherto enjoyed, and weighed down with secret care, his mind was peculiarly susceptible to evil influences, as is the body when worn and overtaxed. The spiritual atmosphere he now breathed was infected with a miasm of unbelief, which, striking at the very heart of revealed truth, denies man's guilt in the sight of God, and makes him independent both of a Saviour and Sanctifier.

Though carefully instructed in the faith of his parents, Charles had never been at one with it in his heart. Though he observed its forms, he contented himself with a morality which, though admirable in itself, can never satisfy God's demands upon the soul, or raise it to the place he designed it to occupy.

Wandering in these new fields of thought, he was charmed to hear, that of himself he could arrive at all truth divine as well as human, without that heavenly aid he had heretofore been taught was indispensable. Like the animals, he could unaided attain the end of his being, and reach perfection, though what this end, this perfection was, did not clearly appear. In short, man, and conse-

quently Charles Franse, was a being wholly adequate to himself.

At first, he was startled at doctrines so at variance with truth as he had been taught it, but as day by day, and week by week, he drank at the same fountain, he became intoxicated with its strange waters, and ended by giving himself up wholly to their influence.

Yet so far he had never exchanged a word with Herr Humbert on these all absorbing themes. He shrank from putting the seal of speech upon his silent agitations, thus bringing them into tangible shape. He was not quite ready to give up the old faith for the new.

Whenever Gretchen's letters came he threw aside his books in dissatisfaction, but as often returned to them.

He had not entered a church since coming to Leipsic, at first from dislike to going among strangers, afterward from doubt if there really were any church to go to.

Herr Humbert had in vain urged him to find out his father's old friends, many of whom were still living. Charles steadily refused,

begging him as a personal favor not to make his presence known to them. The German yielded reluctantly, believing that time would remove the whim, but in this he was mistaken. The winter passed, bringing no change save in their home life, order coming out of confusion, cleanness from untidiness, till, by the aid of Frau Herman, whom Charles at last persuaded the scholar to allow in his rooms, promising not to take his eyes off her while she stayed, all things had assumed that air of comfort and neatness she knew so well how to give.

Herr Humbert was much too honest to hide his pleasure at this improvement, and it also became plain that he was fast transferring a large share of his love for his old friend, Herr Franse, to his son.

Charles returned it in part, though his first impressions of Herr Humbert's character had been modified by more intimate acquaintance. His genial kind-heartedness and humor were often interrupted by seasons of gloom, during which he seemed to become a perfect cynic in his views of men and things. He

would quarrel with statements and deductions, which in a different mood he would defend, and challenge his young secretary to prove him wrong. Charles always exerted himself to the utmost in these contests, knowing he could in no way so gratify his adversary as to defeat him; yet he was at a loss to understand these moods, or occasional remarks that at such times seemed to drop almost unawares from the student's lips, indicating a hopeless despondency, at which the young man greatly marveled.

Involuntarily he contrasted all this with the sublime patience and equanimity he so well remembered as distinguishing his father, even in his final struggle with death itself.

Herr Humbert had a morbid dread of physical decay. His theory was, that if mankind only possessed sufficient knowledge, disease and death might be banished from, or at least, indefinitely postponed on the earth, which, from long study of its wonderful formations, curious growths, and hidden treasures, had become his idol.

Though his scientific searches were extended

as far as possible through space, yet the ball he trod, perhaps from being the nearest, was the dearest of all.

Young Franse knew that many a book on the library shelves taught the "dread sentiment that the universe displays no proof of an all directing mind." Still he shrank from the idea that Herr Humbert gave it the sanction of his belief.

As for himself, he never read them. He was not quite ready to approach the awful brink of total unbelief. He longed to be certain that the sometimes merry German had not taken the plunge; that he was not struggling in the dark waters.

Of one thing he was sure; the spring did not find Herr Humbert the hearty, healthy man the fall had left him. He made no complaint. He labored on, rose early, went late to bed; but his appetite was fitful, his step less firm, and once or twice a strange dimness of sight, and temporary difficulty of utterance, had overtaken him.

Charles thought of none of these things, however, sitting by the window in the spring

sunshine. His book engrossed him, until Frau Herman came to bring him a letter from his twin sister.

Her picture was in it, very like herself, Charles thought, yet wanting, as all pictures must, the changeful look of responsive sympathy which gives the faces we love their tenderest charm.

The letter was merrier than usual, containing an account of poor Lottie's trials with Sir Dash, especially on the evening when we left baby Jennie standing in the door of the music room.

Looking over Charlie's shoulder, as he reads, we find that on the following day our canine friend was consigned to the care of a kind farmer, a mile or so from Eau Claire, since which time his mistress had made continued raids on the land of Nod for the recovery of her lost sleep. The letter being a fortnight old, Charles indulged a reasonable hope that matters at the cottage were now restored to their *pre-canine* state.

Yet how these home pictures harrowed his very soul, longing, as it did, for the old life. His idealistic book no longer charmed him. He

wanted Gretchen, Mabel, the cottage, the lawn, all, all the dear, familiar objects about which his very heart-strings twined. But this would never do. He caught his hat and hurried out for a walk. As he went rapidly along one of the principal streets, he noticed a gentle-eyed, golden-haired woman of perhaps twenty years, bending her fair face to talk with a poor little girl in ragged clothes.

He heard her say, "Tell your mother not to worry; I will be there in half an hour."

Then they both went on their way, and he on his; but the little scene lingered in his thoughts, reminding him so forcibly of Gretchen's sweet kindness.

On coming home to supper, he found Herr Humbert, who having been gone all day, had returned in one of his happiest moods.

"Hranse," he began, as soon as they were seated at the table, "this whim of yours about shutting yourself away from all society, must yield, at least for to-night. Madam Liebnitz saw me to-day, and nothing would do but she must know who was living with me. Of course, when she heard the name, nothing

would do again, but you must go and see her. Her husband, the doctor, was a warm friend of your father's. Beside, he thought everything of Mabel Marsdon. I think the Frau told me he saved her life once."

Charles did not answer immediately. He was evidently more annoyed than he cared to show. At last he said, "Well, really, my dear sir, if I could break over my rule in any case, I would do so here, but I have strong reasons for wishing not to make any acquaintances."

"Well, never mind your reasons, boy, come to-night, and I won't say another word about it," persisted the German.

So they went.

If any of my readers have seen the portraits of the sculptor Thorwaldsen, they can make for themselves a better picture of Madam Liebnitz, than my pen can draw. There is seldom as much resemblance between brother and sister as between them. Changing the pronoun, we quote a recent description of the artist, as fitting this dear old lady more nearly than we can hope to do.

"She was rather above the middle height.

The outline of her face was rather square. The general expression was calm and thoughtful, and very pleasing. Her eyes were light and penetrating. Her mouth wide and closely shut. She wore her hair, which had grown nearly white, in large masses divided over her fine, broad forehead, and falling something like a lion's mane, nearly to her shoulders."

Add to the above, the fall of her lace cap, the white of her muslin neckerchief lying in soft folds about her still beautiful throat, relieving the shade of her black dress, and you have an expressive whole most interesting to gaze at.

Her voice was full and musical, with a motherly sound in it that went straight to the heart of young Franse.

He had not been with her half an hour before there came stealing over him a feeling akin to his old-time, boyish happiness, when he listened to his mother's gentle words, or led his blind but happy father abroad in the summer twilight.

His life for the past few months had been so

lonely, he had felt like such an outcast, despite his determination to the contrary, that this change to the sweet, womanly atmosphere of Frau Liebnitz's house, was like coming from the bare, bleak heaths of Scotland, into the sunny landscapes of France.

She talked of his father, his aunt Gretchen, and Mabel, his half-sister. She was full of interest about himself and all the present inmates of the cottage in far-off America, but whether from native delicacy, or some warning from Herr Humbert, she made no allusion to the why or wherefore of his presence in Leipsic.

"I'm sorry," she said, "that Margaret, my grand-daughter, is not here to-night. But you must come again soon, and let me show her to you. She is all that is left me of a once large family, and very likely I think more of her than she deserves."

"Not a bit of it," cried Herr Humbert. "She is as pretty as a moss-rose, and as good as mint. Where's she gone?"

"To see a sick woman in one of the back streets. 'Twas a sad case; little children crying

for bread, and no money. She took Simon with her. You know I never let her go alone."

"I shouldn't let her go anyway, if she were mine," the student answered.

Madam Liebnitz laughed. "I know it, Herr, but then the child seems cut out for that very work. You know she is quite a doctress, already."

"I don't know anything about it," he replied impatiently. "A fresh, young thing like her has no business with sickness or distress of any sort. She ought to sit and sing all day, like the birds."

"Dear me! how tired she would get," laughed the good lady, as the gentlemen said good-night, and went away.

Hitherto Charles had welcomed sleep as his only relief from the burdens of his own life. To-night, he was in no hurry to forget either the sweet young picture seen in his walk, or the older one he found in Madam Liebnitz's parlor.

"I'm certain not to like that granddaughter," he soliloquized. "No girl could go round as Herr Humbert says she does, among the scum of the city, nursing this, that and

the other sick wretch, without getting coarse and brazen-faced. She may be as good as mint, but as to being as lovely as a moss-rose, I beg leave to doubt it." Then the thought of Gretchen, and her deeds of charity came into his mind. But after all, there was this difference, she did not nurse the poor folks herself, she only saw that somebody else did, and herself gave money freely for their comfort.

Then he wandered off to thoughts about his own immediate future. This work for Herr Humbert was almost done. To-morrow he would finish the last pile of books. Then he must look for other employment. It cost him a sigh to think of leaving the roof where he had first found shelter; the friend who had so kindly aided him in his voluntary exile from home. He wondered if Herr Humbert would be sorry to give him up; if his library would still be open to him in case he remained in Leipsic. This brought to mind the book he was reading when Gretchen's letter came, and he sighed heavily, thinking of his father's piety, of which Madam Liebnitz had spoken in such glowing terms to-night.

She had also said, "I hope his son is like him in this," with a smile full of benevolent interest. Now, in the darkness, these words came back to the young man, and hurt him. They seemed suddenly to show him how far he had wandered from the faith and practice of his parents.

Alone with his ever-present burden, among the pitfalls of Philosophy, Idealism and Infidelity that crowded the scientist's shelves, he had become involved in a labyrinth of mysticism, out of which he saw no way, either back to his starting point, or forward to any firm ground of unbelief. That one little sentence had revealed to him his position, and he shrank from facing it.

If he had paid but slight heed either to the Bible or its teachings, he had, up to leaving home, revered it as a God-given rule of faith and action. He now found himself doubting its inspiration, nay, even its authenticity. Alas, alas! Poor wanderer not only from home but God! What wonder that his heart was heavy, his face pale, his eye sad, and his whole bearing, though full of the proud resolve Mabel

saw when she met him coming from the bank, full, also, of an air of desponding gloom, when for a time he rested from the constant occupation to which he forced himself.

No doubt Herr Humbert had many curious thoughts about his faithful secretary, whose companionship was so pleasant to him; but he kept silence about them, except sometimes to say half aloud, "I wish I knew what sent the boy from home."

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLES began his work next day with the feeling we always bring to the end of anything into which we have put a whole-hearted interest. We part from it reluctantly, no matter how gladly we look beyond it to something new. There was no definite "something" beyond his present almost ended task to lure young Franse, but as usual he went to it with energy, as the best antidote to care.

The books he was now to arrange were piled diagonally across a corner of the library, and reached nearly to the ceiling. He was obliged to mount a step-ladder to come at the topmost ones, which he began carefully to examine, and lay in various heaps on the

floor, but as his eye became accustomed to the dim light beyond, he spied something in the corner that roused his curiosity. As soon as possible he reached over and drew it up to the light, when he discovered it to be a figure in bronze, but so covered with dust and cobwebs as entirely to hide its design. In lifting it he was surprised at its weight, which seemed great for its height, which was less than two feet, but placing it upon a table by the window, he began a vigorous assault on its time honored covering. As he worked, he became every moment more certain he had under his hand a rare work of art. When at last he placed the figure in the best light and stepped back to view it, he uttered an involuntary cry of delight and admiration. He had seen many bronzes, but never, he thought, one to equal this for exquisite workmanship and life-likeness. The figure seemed to him to represent a traveler toiling up an ascent, his eager eye fixed upon some coveted prize on the summit. The face was scarred and worn and wrinkled, yet full of cheerful courage, and firm resolve, while a calm peace

seemed to pervade it as does sunlight a rugged landscape. The drapery of a cloak softened, without concealing, the muscular vigor represented in every limb, and as Charles gazed he could hardly realize that the statue was not instinct with the earnest purpose, the eager life it so well represented.

What original had suggested to the artist a subject so simple, yet so striking? He searched in vain both history and mythology for one that would meet the case.

At last he returned to his work, often stopping to feast his eyes on the beautiful treasure he had discovered.

But how came it hidden away in a corner, where it was plain it must have long remained undisturbed?

He waited impatiently for Herr Humbert to return, hoping he would be able to give him the desired information.

No sooner were they seated at supper than Franse began his eager questionings.

"Oh, yes, I remember. I had forgotten all about that thing," replied the German. "A friend gave it to me ever so many years

ago. He was a sort of lunatic on the subject of art collections. Show him the most curious stone or fossil, and he cared no more for it than an ape, but a statue or a picture, especially if it had the merit of age, and he was a mass of delight from head to foot.

"Well, for all that, he was a man of sense, and a warm friend of mine. When he offered to give me that bronze, in an outburst of affectionate interest, I made a show of being pleased, and while he lived I kept it in the front rank among my treasures, for fear I should wound his honest soul by my indifference. After he died it got displaced, and passed entirely out of my mind."

"Can you really be in earnest in saying you care nothing for it?" Charles asked, in astonishment.

"I was never more so," replied Herr Humbert. "If you want the thing, pray take it, in welcome. I am glad for the sake of my old friend, that it has fallen into the hands of somebody who will value it. If I remember rightly, it is supposed to be quite an antiquity."

"In the words of an American friend of

mine, 'your kindness forget I never shall,'" laughed the young man. "The gift will have a double value for me, its own intrinsic merit, and as a memento of one who has been very kind to me."

"Tut, tut, boy, none of that. Maybe I've done you more harm than good after all." And with this the student went away to his books and his writing-table, while Charles disposed his new requisition in the most favorable spot his room afforded, where he could feast his eyes on it continually. He wondered if Madam Liebnitz would admire it as much as he did, and fell asleep determining to ask her permission to show it to her.

He had left Herr Humbert busily writing, when he came to bed, and next morning on going as usual to the study, he found him sitting much as he had left him the previous evening.

"Good morning, sir," he said, "one would think you had not left your chair all night." Then he paused, expecting the student to look around and speak, but in vain. A sudden fear came over him. He sprang to his

side. Herr Humbert lifted his once keen eye, now dim in its imploring helplessness, to Charles, but made no motion, uttered no sound. Paralysis was upon him. Terrified beyond measure, the young man raised him carefully in his arms and laid him on his bed, then sent Frau Herman for a doctor, and watched by the bedside until he came. The time, though short, seemed interminable, having neither knowledge nor power to do anything for the sufferer, and obliged to stand helplessly by while he struggled to utter words which were wholly unintelligible to Charles.

At last they came, Frau Herman and Doctor Tomberg. Then all was done that skill or kindness could suggest, but the doctor looked grave, and said the symptoms were bad. Presently he went away, promising to return in a few hours. There was little for Charles or the housekeeper to do but watch and wait. From his soul he wished the attack had produced unconsciousness. The terrible sight of a conscious and apparently agonized soul denied all utterance except through the restless, beseeching eyes, was almost more than he could bear.

Toward noon Herr Humbert seemed to fall asleep, and when Doctor Tomberg returned he spoke more hopefully. So strong a constitution might rally at least partially, and linger on a while yet. He told Frau Herman that he had asked Margaret Liebnitz to come in during the afternoon. "If anybody can understand and comfort the poor Herr, it is she," he said. "Her tact and skill with the sick is beyond almost anything I ever saw."

The clocks of Leipsic had hardly sounded two hours past noon, when Frau Herman came to say that Fraulien Liebnitz had come.

"Shall I go away?" asked Charles.

Herr Humbert suddenly opened his eyes, and looked up at him imploringly, trying to speak.

"He wants you to stay. She won't mind," the Frau said, and went out directly to fetch Margaret. At sight of her Charles started. She was the same graceful woman he had seen on the street two days before.

She did not seem to notice him, but went at once to the sick man, and bending over

him, said smilingly, "May I stay a little while, Herr Humbert? Grandma sent me."

The sufferer moved his lips. She fixed her eyes on them. "I didn't quite understand," she said, as if the fault was all her own. "I will be more careful if you will say it again." He made another attempt, and she caught his meaning.

"Oh, thank you," she said. "I'm glad you want me to stay."

Charles saw the look of intense relief that came into the sick man's eyes when he found that she understood him.

Again he tried to speak. "Tell the—" she repeated, but lost the rest. Once more he made the effort, and again she said after him, "Tell the boy not—" A third time he tried the sentence, and she caught the full meaning. "Tell the boy not to leave me."

"Is that right?" she asked, looking puzzled.

"I think it is, Fraulien Liebnitz," Franse said, coming from the distance to which he had retired on her entrance, and taking Herr Humbert's powerless hand in his. "I am Charles Franse." Then speaking to the Herr,

he added, "I promise you, my dear sir, I will not leave you so long as you want me."

These words brought again the look of relief into Herr Humbert's eyes, and he said, "Stay, both of you."

"Yes, whenever you want me," Margaret promised, adding, "Now let us rest a little."

She sat down by the bedside, and while she gently chafed one poor hand, she sang in a low, sweet voice,—

"A gentle Angel walketh throughout a world of woe,
With messages of mercy to mourning hearts below;
His peaceful smile invites them to love and to confide,
Oh, follow in His footsteps, keep closely by His side!

"So gently will He lead thee through all the cloudy day,
And whisper of glad tidings to cheer the pilgrim-way;
His courage never failing when thine is almost gone,
He takes thy heavy burden, and helps to bear it on.

"He will not blame thy sorrows, while He brings the healing balm;
He does not chide thy longings, while He soothes them into calm;
And when thy heart is murmuring, and wildly asking why?
He, smiling, beckons *forward*, points upward to the sky.

"He will not always answer thy questions and thy fear,
His watchword is 'Be patient, the journey's end is near!'
And ever through the toilsome way, He tells of joys to come,
And points the pilgrim to his rest, the wanderer to his home."

The anxious eyes closed, and presently

two big tears came forth, and rolled down the pallid face. If Margaret's voice was less steady as she sang on, it was the only notice she took of them, and by and by Herr Humbert slept again.

Dr. Tomberg's few directions were faithfully carried out by the two young watchers, who with Frau Herman remained silently by the sick man till evening, when the physician again came in. This third visit seemed greatly to excite the patient. His efforts to speak were terrible to see, their very eagerness defeating the attempt. At last, Margaret, distressed beyond measure, because she failed to understand, exclaimed, "Please, dear Herr, don't try so hard. Make less effort. There, now I will get it this time."

His eyes seemed to glow with angry impatience, but he obeyed her, and she caught his meaning.

"He wants a consultation of at least four of the best physicians in the city," she said, addressing Dr. Tomberg. "He wants it at once, to-night."

"Very well, it shall be arranged as soon as

possible," replied the doctor. Then he mentioned several names, from which Herr Humbert made his choice.

"I will bring them to-night, if possible; if not, to-morrow early," he said, as he turned to go.

"To-night, to-night," urged the sick man eagerly.

"I promise you I will bring them in an hour, if I can find them," he answered soothingly, and immediately went away.

"And now, dear Herr, you will not want me any more to-night," Margaret said. "I will come back to-morrow."

"No, no, stay!" he implored, "nobody else can tell them what I want to say."

Thus urged, there seemed no alternative but to remain till after the consultation. Simon, the faithful servant, had just come from her grandmother to take her home; and by him she sent back word how matters stood, saying that if he would return for her she would go as soon as she could be spared. Another long two hours dragged out their length, and at their end came the five doctors.

Margaret and Frau Herman withdrew to the supper-room, and waited for the consultation to end; waited silently but for Frau Herman, who, impelled by a strong sense of hostess' duty to entertain Margaret, yet having nothing to say, could only ejaculate, "Alas, that we should live to see this day!"

Margaret, despite her anxiety, would answer sweetly, if only by a pleasant smile, until at the end of a half hour, Charles opened the door and came in.

"I am sorry, Fraulien Liebnitz," he said, going up to her, "to ask you to come among all these doctors, but Herr Humbert is almost frantic because they can't understand him. Possibly you could get at his meaning, if you were there. Is it asking too much?"

"Certainly not," she said, rising quickly. "Frau Herman will go with me," and without more ado they went to the sick room.

The doctors fell back as the young girl entered, going straight to the bed-side, with a heightened color, but otherwise self possessed.

The patient fixed his wild, excited eyes upon her, and bending every thought to the work,

she caught from his feeble lips, these words: "Tell 'em they are a pack of fools! Five learned heads together, and can't think of anything to help one sick man!"

In spite of herself Margaret laughed outright at the idea of giving this message to the group so anxiously waiting to discover their patient's wishes: but feeling that mirth was singularly out of place, she turned gravely to Dr. Tomberg, saying,—

"The Herr is surprised that five so learned gentlemen as his physicians can think of so little for his relief." Here she was again interrupted by the sick man's efforts to speak. "Tell 'em to read, and study, and search. Tell 'em there's a remedy somewhere," he made her comprehend.

This she repeated verbatim, and Doctor Hoeber, an old man with very white hair and a benevolent face, came to the sick man, whose hand he took kindly in his, saying,—

"Be assured, my dear sir, we will each do our utmost to help you. We *will* read, study, search; but let us remember that the issues of life and death are in mightier hands than

ours. Let us look to God." He paused a moment, then added, "Keep as calm as possible, and try to sleep. Nothing is worse for you than excitement. Meantime be sure we will do everything in our power."

Then they all went away, Dr. Tomberg only lingering to give some last directions.

Herr Humbert fell asleep soon after, and Margaret, leaving Franse and the housekeeper watching beside him, went away to her grandmother.

CHAPTER XVI.

THUS left to watch alone beside the patient, Franse's weary but excited brain led him a very inconvenient round among his pet theories.

Herr Humbert had been to him a living demonstration of the idea that each human soul is sufficient unto itself; that from its unaided depths it can evolve all truth, all goodness, and reach its highest perfection and happiness. Even the varying moods to which this one was subject, seemed but necessary shadows making the brightness brighter by contrast.

Yet here he lay a helpless thing in the iron grasp of a terrible disease. Not only a helpless, but a pitiful thing, for who could doubt

that the soul looking out from those beseeching eyes was utterly void of support or comfort in itself. It turned frantically for help even to a girl, to Margaret, and yet greater wonder, she surely met its wants better than any other. But why? Was it because she alone could understand the feeble tongue? Was it her beauty, her gentleness? No, her soothing power lay deeper than either quickness, grace, or courtesy: it was soul power, but of what sort Franse could not tell. He only knew that Herr Humbert, with his mighty mind, five learned doctors, giving a faultless diagnosis, yet powerless to help, himself full of longing to relieve, had yet to give place to a woman as the best helper in this hour of great need.

Alas, how many symmetrical theories have been undermined and overthrown by stubborn fact! With poor Herr Humbert before him it was hard to maintain a perfect belief in the absolute self-sufficiency of the human soul.

From such contradictions as these he gladly escaped to thoughts of Madame Liebnitz and her granddaughter. How different was the

latter from his preconceived notions of her. So far the moss-rose was plainer even than the mint. Her dress, though simple, was arranged with an evident eye to beauty, both in shape and color. Her waving hair was caught tastefully about her well-formed head. In place of the coarseness he had been sure of finding, was a delicacy, almost a daintiness, in tone and manner that astonishsd him.

She seemed as little soiled by contact with the poverty and dirt of courts and alleys, as does the stray sunbeam that wanders in to gladden their wretched inmates.

Poor Charles! Here fact and theory clash again!

One thing at least was certain,—the night seemed very long, and the watcher was rejoiced when the city was again awake, and Frau Herman came to say that breakfast was ready.

Herr Humbert, being under the influence of a sleeping potion, had not spoken since the doctors left him; but as Charles rose to give his place by the bed to the housekeeper, he opened his eyes, and said, with considerable distinctness, "Where are you going, boy?"

"Only to breakfast," he replied. "You are better this morning. I can't tell you how glad I am."

"What do you care?" the sick man said peevishly. "I'm good for nothing. Better throw me to the dogs."

"Excuse me, sir, the dogs can't have you just yet," Franse answered, laughing. "We're going to have you at your work again before long."

He lay silent for a moment, then muttered, "Yes, they will find it. They can't miss it. There must be a remedy somewhere."

Madam Liebnitz's servant-man, Simon, came early to inquire for the patient, bringing word that his young mistress could not return till afternoon, as she was greatly needed elsewhere; but he would stay if he could be of any service. Charles gladly accepted this offer, as Simon was, from long practice, a skillful nurse, while he felt himself to be a perfect novice.

Herr Humbert slept through the morning, waking at intervals to inquire if Margaret were come, or tighten his hold on that straw of hope,

expressed in the repeated ejaculation, "They will find it. It's somewhere. The fools can't miss it."

Dr. Tomberg was surprised at his patient's improved articulation, and spoke hopefully.

"Keep up your courage, Herr, we will have you round again, soon," he said cheerfully. "You must give us a little time, you know, and help us, beside, by keeping free from excitement."

"Are you doctors studying and searching with all your might after the cure?" demanded the patient. "You *promised*, and beside I am able to make it worth your while to hunt till you find it."

"You can understand that we doctors would search till we found it, if only in the interest of science, much more to prolong so valuable a life as yours, sir," the doctor said earnestly.

But outside the sick room, the beginning and end of instructions was, "*Keep him quiet!*"

"Is there any hope of recovery?" Franse asked. "None whatever, I think," replied Dr. Tomberg. "He may get able to leave his

bed, but his working days are over. How long he will live depends mainly on the strength of his constitution."

"You see how he clings to the idea that somewhere there is a cure, and that it will be found?"

The physician sighed. "His case is perfectly plain," he said. "If he knew medicine as he knows astronomy, he would see how little can be done for him. One of the trials of our profession is to be considered all powerful to conquer some disease, before which we know ourselves to be almost helpless. After all, you and Margaret Liebnitz are his best doctors, for you can keep him calm and cheerful."

Soon after dinner Margaret came, bringing a message from her grandmother, asking Charles to go to her.

"The walk will do you good," she urged, "You have had a trying time since yesterday morning. There is plenty of help with the Frau, Simon and myself. Go, now, and don't come back for two hours at least."

Thus urged, the young man obeyed. He was

weary and unstrung, mind and body. The air and sunlight were reviving, and Madam Liebnitz, by daylight, was not one whit less charming than she was in the bright evening light, where he first saw her.

"I am glad you came," she said cordially, when he was seated by her stately arm chair. "Margaret said you looked worn, which is very true, and no wonder; the poor Herr must be a sad sight, indeed."

"He is; and it is very distressing to watch by him, without the power of giving him relief. His disease seems to lie almost outside of medical skill."

"And Margaret tells me he hopes strongly that some remedy will be fouud."

"True; yet I wonder at it in a mind so strong as his."

"I am afraid there is less strength than you imagine," Madame Liebnitz said gravely. "Only he who is strong in the *Lord*, can bear up bravely under such a calamity. In Herr Humbert we see the weakness of the human soul, when it stands unsupported on the brink of eternity. His, imprisoned in the castle

of unbelief it has so laboriously built for itself, to which it has sacrificed its heaven-born instincts, now lies prostrate, surrounded by all that rare intellectual food on which it has so long feasted, yet starving for one morsel of the bread of life."

She paused, but Charles remained silent. He was pondering her words.

Presently she went on, "If, in place of the dismal, uncertain future, from which he shrinks with horror the nearer it approaches, he saw by the light of God's word, a friend and Saviour ready to welcome him to a world where he would know as he is known, do you think he would manifest such agony at thought of going, such frantic cagerness to spend a few more years here in the shadow?"

Still Franse made no answer. Was it true, as Madam Liebnitz said, that the human soul would stand trembling and aghast before the solemn change that sooner or later comes to all, unless, like a helpless child, it can feel about it the strong arm of a Divine protector? Was this its boasted self-sufficiency?

Madam Liebnitz saw the impression her

words had made. She laid her hand kindly on the young man's arm, and added, "To understand me fully, you have only to recall your father's last days, in contrast with what you now see. If ever a man was intellectually strong, it was he, both by nature and cultivation; yet you well know this was not what sustained him under the burden of life, or gave him peace at the last. He was strong in the Lord. But I won't prose any more," she added, smiling. "Let us talk of something else."

"Not till I have asked one question, please," Charles said, speaking at last. "Why is it that Miss Liebnitz can comfort the poor Herr so much better than the rest of us? When she is by him, he is more quiet."

"I don't know; but my explanation is that she brings to him just what he most needs. Margaret is very strong in the strength we were just speaking of. I fancy she gives it out as the sun does heat. No doubt he feels tranquillized by it."

Charles neither quite understood nor believed this solution, but they soon drifted away

from the subject to others of more general interest. Finally, reminded of his bronze figure, by some remark of his hostess, he told her about it, asking permission to show it to her when he came again.

He was sorry when his two hours' leave came to an end, but he went back to his dreary home warmed by the genial, domestic atmosphere where they had been spent.

He went also with many conflicting, remorseful thoughts. His conscience was stirred by the lofty piety Madam Liebnitz had so frankly expressed, but more by what she had said of his father. How absurd, he thought, for the son of such a man, a mere stripling in science and philosophy, to renounce as unworthy his credence, that faith on which his father with all his varied learning had so devoutly leaned; in which he had spared no pains to instruct his son. Still his intellectual pride was very sensitive; he could not be in leading strings, even to his own father.

As he came near the half open door of Herr Humbert's bed-room, he heard Margaret's voice, soft, low, but very clear. She was reading aloud. He stopped to listen.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." She paused. It seemed to Charles as if an angel had spoken, so sweet, yet so solemn was her tone.

"He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." Again there was silence save for the rustling of leaves, as she turned them; but Charles stood where he was.

"The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Yet, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Then he heard her close the book and begin singing one of her sweet German hymns.

He would not interrupt her. He went away to Frau Herman, bidding her tell Miss Liebnitz that he was ready to resume his place beside Herr Humbert.

Presently Margaret came to him in the

library. "You look refreshed," she said, pleasantly. "The rest has done you good. I am going home, now, but Simon will watch to-night, while you make up your sleep. Herr Humbert is willing, so don't object, please," seeing Charles about to remonstrate. "I advise you to take care of yourself. If I am not mistaken, the poor Herr will make a heavy demand on your strength and patience, before the end comes."

"I can bear it, with you for an occasional helper," Franse said.

"You must bear it, any way," she said, with her sunny smile. "However, I'll help you all I can. Now, good-bye, and see that you make a long night of it."

When she disappeared, the young man remained for a little space, thinking how very sweet it was to hear again a womanly voice in kindly accents speaking something after the manner of his sister or Mabel.

"How long must I banish myself?" he thought. "When can I go home? Not yet. I must be firm for her sake," and so he went at once to the sick-room.

The student's eye lighted up at sight of him. "I'm glad to see you, boy," he said, moving his right hand slightly, as if to extend it in welcome. Charles caught it eagerly; it was the first perceptible attempt at motion Herr Humbert had made since the attack.

"You will get over this. See how much you have improved already."

"I should if I knew medicine, and could doctor myself," snarled the patient. "Those men don't know what it means to study. I wonder what book Margaret was reading from?"

"Wasn't it the Bible?" Franse asked in surprise.

"Perhaps so. Now I think of it, I'm sure it was. I haven't seen one for years; not since your father went to America. I liked the sound. I wish we had one, so you could read to me."

Charles looked incredulously at the great scientist, as he stammered forth these words. It seemed impossible those sublime sentences could have made so little impression. He half believed the indifference was affected, to cover

his anxiety for more. He recalled what Madam Liebnitz had said of his soul being starved for a morsel of the bread of life, and he went to get his own Bible, neglected, to be sure, but dear, if only because Gretchen had given it to him.

Coming back, he sat down, and opened to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, for no special reason but because he had often read it to his father.

Herr Humbert seemed to listen attentively. When Franse finished, he said, "That will do. I want to think."

Presently the doctor came, bringing nothing but hopeful words. Then the patient was made ready for night, and having seen all things done, Charles left Simon to watch, while he went away to make a long night of it, as Margaret had bidden him.

CHAPTER XVII.

TO the surprise of all, Herr Humbert was so far recovered at the end of a fortnight, as to be able, with the help of Charles and the house-keeper, to reach his arm-chair by the study window. But here the improvement ended. He was as helpless as a baby, needing even to be fed; which sorely tried his temper, naturally so self-reliant, and rendered him fretful and impatient. Charles gave him the dutiful attention of a son; but he was becoming very weary of the new life thus imposed on him, and but for Margaret's influence, would hardly have borne it patiently. Her fresh, bright presence, her faultless dress, her gentle yet self-reliant ways, had a wonderfully sustaining effect on Franse. She came, however, to relieve him,

and so always sent him away for rest or recreation, so he made but little progress toward acquaintance, after all.

It was far different with Madam Liebnitz. With her he spent many pleasant hours, notwithstanding the dear old lady had a way of making him wonderfully dissatisfied with himself.

Was it because she took it for granted that the son of Herr Franse could not be other than right-minded in all moral and religious truths, and so claimed his sympathy with her views in a confident way that half vexed, half gratified him? Or was it because he could never get courage to dissent from her opinions, thus giving her a false impression of his own? Perhaps he was vexed because he often found himself wishing he was all she thought him. But, after all, what was wanting? Nothing, if the books on Herr Humbert's library shelves could be trusted. A great deal, if the Bible spoke the truth.

Meantime, Margaret was daily trying to penetrate the prison of unbelief which confined the soul of the great scientist. She read her solemn

Bible words, and sang her sweet hymns with a child-like faith that surprised Franse. He wondered what possible good she expected thus to accomplish, forgetting "that the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Herr Humbert always brightened when she came, always listened while she read or sang, but gave no sign that either went farther than the hearing of the ears.

Thus matters went on, till one evening Simon came, as he often did, to pass the night with Herr Humbert.

"Madam Liebnitz sends her regards, and begs you will go to her for a while," he said to Franse.

"I will take the bronze," he thought, something having heretofore prevented his carrying it.

When he arrived, he was glad to find Margaret with her grandmother.

"That is right. You have brought it at

last," said Madam Liebnitz, seeing the figure in his arms.

"Will this be a good place for it?" asked Margaret, making room on the center-table, underneath the strong light of the chandelier.

Franse thanked her, and set it down where he judged its beauty would be displayed to the best advantage. Then he stepped back to enjoy the admiration he was certain it would receive.

Nor was he disappointed. Both ladies were enthusiastic in their praise.

"But what does it represent?" he asked. Neither answered at first. Then the fraulien looked up confidently, saying,—

"It is Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress."

"That can't be," Franse answered hastily. "Herr Humbert said this was a very ancient work. Beside, so skillful an artist would hardly select such a subject."

"That may be," she replied, without a shade of annoyance in her tone. "Still it is very like my idea of Bunyan's warrior."

"Is there no inscription anywhere on it, giving some clue to its design?" asked Madam Liebnitz.

"Not that I can find," Charles answered.

"Why, how heavy it is!" Margaret exclaimed, taking it up, and resting the base on her hand. "What are these I feel?" and she turned the figure so the underside of the pedestal came into view.

Franse took it from her, and after a close examination, said, "I believe they are screws that hold some of the parts together. Let us take them out and see what will come of it."

"How strange you didn't find them before!" Margaret said.

"Well, I don't know; it never occurred to me to turn the thing upside down," he replied, laughing.

"I suppose you consider my doing so an additional proof of feminine curiosity," she returned, as she left the room to find something with which to start the screws.

This was no easy matter, the screws being sunk beneath the surface in such a way that it was hardly possible to get hold of them. At last one yielded, and was carefully turned round and round, till suddenly something fell to the floor with a loud noise. All started,

and began to search for the cause of alarm. Margaret was the first to miss the center button of three that ornamented the figure on the left shoulder. In falling it left exposed a small round hole, from which the screw they were turning had just passed out. Presently the missing button was found, and proved to be a nut that when screwed on a slender rod reaching up from the base held it firmly in place. Judging that the center button of the right shoulder performed the same office as its mate, it was carefully removed, and, as they expected, another slender rod was set free, and drawn out.

They then found that the bronze base was in two parts, one resting on the other, and only held together by the rods. The figure was fastened to the upper half, but as it was carefully lifted, it seemed to meet with some internal resistance. At last, however, Franse succeeded in disengaging it, when, to his amazement, as well as that of the others, an inner figure of dazzling whiteness came into view. It was of the finest Parian marble, and represented a warrior in complete armor.

The vizor of the helmet was raised, leaving the features exposed. They were exquisitely carved, and bore to the bronze face the same indescribable likeness sometimes seen between youth and age, or beauty and ugliness.

In the strong light of the burners, they seemed transparent, spiritual, almost unearthly in their purity. A lion crouched upon the helmet in place of the dragon, so favorite a device with the early English knights. The left arm was raised, and bore a shield, having a cross in its center. The right hand grasped a sword half drawn from its sheath, which was bound upon the left thigh by a curiously wrought girdle, that encompassed the loins. The breastplate was elaborately carved, as were also the greaves. A serpent lay coiled on the marble pedestal, with its head beneath the warrior's heel.

It was plain to the three who stood silently gazing at this unexpected revelation, that they beheld no ordinary work of art.

"It looks more like Bunyan's Christian than ever," Margaret said, with a roguish glance at Charles.

He smiled, but shook his head as he bent down to examine the work more closely.

"There are letters among this scroll-work on the breastplate, but I can't make out the words," he said, turning to Margaret, "perhaps you can."

She made no false pretense of fear, lest she should not succeed, when he had failed. "I'll try," she simply said, and bent herself to the task.

Almost immediately she looked up to Madam Liebnitz, who was watching her earnestly. "Grandma," she asked, "what are those verses in the last chapter of Ephesians, about the armor of God? I think some of them are here, but the letters are so small, and hide away among the scroll-work so curiously, I can hardly find them."

"Do you mean 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might?'" asked Madam Liebnitz. "Yes, and here they are in the center. Just see, Herr Franse, how the letters wind round and round from the middle of the breastplate to its outer edge."

Charles looked where the tapering finger

pointed, and followed it with his eyes, while his ear took in the words she read. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

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"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."

"Why, this reminds one of that beautiful temple your father prized so much," said Madam Liebnitz, as Franse turned away, vexed and disappointed at finding how near Margaret came to the truth in her guess at what the bronze meant.

"The thought here is hardly as plain as it was in that," he replied. "I confess I don't get at this at all."

"Doesn't the idea of an inner and an outer man, explain it?" Margaret asked a little

timidly. "Isn't that why there is such a curious likeness between the marble and the bronze? Doesn't one represent the soul, the other the body, and both united an earnest Christian soldier?"

"Yes, dear, I think you have solved the riddle," Madam Liebnitz said, gazing fondly at the eager young face now in a glow of admiration for the unknown artist, and pious sympathy with his design.

Charles said nothing. This gem both of bronze and of marble, would no longer be a mere art work, stirring his keen sense of the beautiful. Henceforth it would appeal to an entirely different set of emotions — emotions that it was not pleasant, in the present state of his thoughts, to have aroused.

Thinking thus, he took hold of the statue, for the purpose of moving it where he could more easily slip the bronze back in place, when the marble block on which it rested came out from the bronze base in which it was sunk, leaving a space beneath in which was a folded paper. He took it up, and carefully spread it out on the table, the ladies meanwhile watch-

ing him eagerly, as he ran his eye along the faded lines.

"This is the strangest thing that ever came to pass!" he exclaimed. "You spoke just now of my father's temple, and here is another piece of work from the same hand, in possession of his son!"

"Do you mean to say that Santo Lombardo made this?" cried Madam Liebnitz.

"It seems so, at least, in part. If you please, I will read this aloud."

"Oh, do!" exclaimed Margaret, and he began,—

"'I am Antonio, Santo Lombardo's friend. Dear to me as my own soul, was this brave Christian hero. He fought not with foes, under the free sky, but with those that lurked in every corner of his solitary dungeon.

"'We were artisans. He was a sculptor, I, a worker in metals. In Rome, our native city, we were employed by the Emperor among his choicest workmen.

"'We were happy; Lombardo in his sweet young wife and two fair children, and I in

him who was to me in place of all earthly kindred.

"'We were Christians, holding our forbidden faith in secret, for fear of those horrors that had overtaken so many of our brethren; yet Lombardo dreaded them less for himself than for those who were dearer to him than life. He was of a bold, impetuous spirit and could ill endure the scoffs and taunts with which our heathen companions were wont to speak of our divine leader, Jesus of Nazareth. Oft times I trembled, when, forgetting all prudence, he flung back upon them words of lofty rebuke, that for the time never failed to awe them into silence.

"'By nature timid and worldly-wise, I shrank from the consequences he might thus bring upon himself and all his house. I pleaded with him most earnestly, I besought him to consider before it was too late. He heard me patiently, and always promised greater care, yet I knew in my heart he felt only contempt for my weak timidity. At last what I had so long feared befell him. Having given a stern but merited rebuke to one Leonardo, an under

workman, for great carelessness in the doing of an important task, revenge led him to denounce Lombardo before the tribunal as a Christian.

"'Suddenly, without warning, the cloud burst upon us. The one on whom our earthly love centred, was torn from us, and thrown into a dungeon, there to await his doom. From the first stupor of our despair we awoke to the most agonizing dread lest at any moment Lombardo should be flung to wild beasts in the amphitheater, or burned with fire, or killed with the sword.

"'But as weeks dragged on, and none of these things came to pass, we became more calm. Hope began to rise. Possibly being only an artisan, our noble Lombardo would be forgotten; so his wife and little ones hid away from the sight of men, lest they should bring to mind the captive they so loved, and thus hasten his destruction.

"'Prayers, tears, groans, were poured in secret at the feet of Him for whose dear sake Lombardo suffered, while back into our hearts flowed many a sweet drop of comfort and

peace. I made Lombardo's family my care, and so the first year passed, bringing no tidings of him we loved. Then we learned by accident his place of confinement. It was within the city. Feeling our way cautiously, we at last discovered that we could see him, with little risk either to him or ourselves. As we hoped, he seemed to have been forgotten. At last we grew bold, and went often to his cell. Oh, the unutterable joy of these meetings! Ever cheerful, he sustained our drooping spirits. Prisoner though he was, we leaned upon him as in the old days when he was free.

"'During the second year of his imprisonment, he conceived the idea of the temple, upon which he worked till the close of his mortal life. None but he could have met and conquered the manifold difficulties that hindered the execution of this design. But his determination never wavered. Captive though he was, his skill must contrive a way for the expression of his burning love to Christ. But for this, methinks, he would sooner have yielded to the hardships of his prison life, for scarcely

was the work finished when death set his spirit free.

"'We were with him toward the close of that last day. We had seen him put the last delicate strokes upon the marble. He was wan and pale almost like a spectre, but the peace of God sat on lip and brow, and shone in his clear dark eye. At parting he held his wife and children long in his embrace, and when I grasped his hand, he whispered, "God bless you, Antonio. Care still for these precious ones."

"'We never heard his voice again, nor did we see the temple more, neither could we learn who took it from the cell; but the memory of my noble friend, and of his rare work, never left me. I longed to imitate his example, to compel from my God-given talent some lasting tribute to him I love.

"'The thought grew stronger with each day, until I spoke of it to Marcia, Lombardo's wife. "Oh, for his skill in working marble!" I exclaimed. "Then I would fashion an inner and an outer man, a Christian pilgrim with the spirit of a Christian knight, clad in the armor of God."

"'"Will this help you?" she asked, bringing from an inner chamber a figure cut in Parian marble, as only Lombardo could do it.

"'"Why have I never seen this before?" I cried, jealous that any of my friend's work had been hid from me.

"'"Because he thought to keep it till some fiery persecution overtook you; then he would give it you and bid you be strong in the Lord, as he would have you."

"'"When did he carve it?"

"'"Before he went to prison."

"'"May I have it now?"

"'"You may. He made it for you. Here is the soul; it only wants a pilgrim's body."

"'I took it; and as time and chance permitted, made for it a covering of bronze. I have brought to it all the skill of which I am master, but when was Antonio's work fit to stand beside Lombardo's, much less to hide it! Yet have I done my best. And now, O Lord, accept the labor of my hands. Let it help some feeble soul to fix his eye on heaven, and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus."

"'Let Lombardo's work, the inner man, help it to put on the whole armor of God, that it may be strong in Thee, and in the power of Thy might.'"

When the reading was finished, Franse slowly folded up the paper and put it back in its place. The ladies saw he was deeply moved, and neither spoke. He took up the marble to set it again in the bronze base, but paused to examine the girdle.

"Did you notice this rose which seems to hold the belt in place?" he asked, speaking to Margaret. "It is perfectly exquisite, but it seems out of place on armor, does'nt it?"

"Isn't it emblematical?" she returned.

"Of what?"

"Of the Saviour, just as is the lion on the helmet."

Madam Liebnitz saw the look of perplexity this explanation left on the young man's face.

"You know," she said "he is spoken of in the Bible as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and also as the Rose of Sharon."

"Oh, yes. I get the idea now," he said,

half impatiently. The whole thing was a disappointment. He was vexed that an art work which so compelled his admiration, should side with his conscience and force upon him a subject from which he shrank, and about which he tried to fancy he didn't care.

But the evening was far spent, and presently he covered the pure white marble with its dark shell, slipped back and secured the slender rods, said good-night, and went home.

Herr Humbert was sleeping quietly, so having made sure that his comfort was secured for the night, Charles went to bed, leaving the bronze on the library table.

He no longer wanted it where it would meet his eye on waking. He wanted to forget it, the beautiful, curious, condemning thing! But he could easier shut it out of his room than out of his thoughts. Helmet of salvation! Sword of the Spirit! Gospel of peace! The words kept sounding themselves over and over in his ear, conveying little meaning to his mind, and irritating him all the more for that very reason.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BAD Charles known what was passing at Eau Claire, he might more easily have dismissed the bronze from his mind.

We left baby Jennie standing in the parlor door. We find her in mamma's bed, no longer rosy and plump, but wan and pale. Her serious eyes are larger than ever, and full of the suffering that has wasted her little roly-poly body.

Papa Ned sits by with one tiny hand in his big palm, while with the other he strokes Lottie's curly head, as it rests on his knee, she having thrown herself on the floor beside him in a fit of passionate crying. Dr. Allison is also by, and holds Jennie's other hand. Every now

and then he smiles down at her, saying tenderly, "Good girl! Brave little lady." and kindred words, that make the poor little face wreath itself in poor little smiles.

"And is that the only way out of it, Doctor?" Granger asked, his face full of the pain that wrung his heart.

"I'm afraid so. I was sure of it before the consultation."

"What 'ou 'faid of?" Jennie asked. "I isn't 'faid of nosin tause papa Ned tome," and she tried to turn toward him, but cried out with pain, at the movement.

Lottie sprang to her feet with a sharp cry, and ran out of the room exclaiming,—

"I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

Mabel, who had been standing by a distant window, followed her.

"Poor Lottie!" Granger ejaculated, brushing his hand hastily across his eyes, "She suffers almost as much as Jennie."

"Far more, I think," Allison replied.

Just then a colored woman entered, with supper for the little one. She was fat, though far from clumsy, and her black face shone

with a benevolent good humor that vailed the natural keenness of her bright eyes.

"See here, honey, what dis 'ole aunty got," she said, coming to the bed. "Now we'll have suthen nice, and a story all 'bout them chillen, you knows. You go 'way, doctor," she went on, pretending to push him aside. "I wants dis yere chile. And papa Ned may go too. He's tired, and mamma wants him a spell. By'm by he may come back."

Jennie looked but half pleased with this arrangement, but when papa Ned kissed her and promised to come back very soon, and Allison bid her go to sleep like a good girl, so he could tell her a beautiful story when he came in the morning, she let them depart without protest, save a pitiful little sigh that sounded like a smothered sob.

"I don't understand, yet, how this accident happened," Granger said, as he and the doctor entered the parlor and sat down.

"The man took the grind-stone out of the frame, and leaned it against the tool-house," Allison replied. "It could not have been set very close, to be sure, or the poor child could'nt have crept behind it."

"I don't see what possessed her to do it."

"Childhood possessed her. No doubt, to her little mind, that space between the stone and the wall, looked as tempting as some of those tight places into which we men sometimes crawl do to us; places where we get worse hurt even than she did. The wonder is she wasn't killed outright. Let us be thankful she only brought down the heavy stone on her poor little knee, as she crept out, and not on her head as she crept in."

"But, doctor, the idea of amputation is horrible!"

"So it is, Granger, but the idea of death is worse!"

"Has it surely come to that?"

"It has. We have done everything possible to save the leg. Now the sooner she is relieved of it, the sooner her suffering will end, and she be at liberty to grow well, and strong, again."

"But, doctor, how can Lottie bear it? Just think of her baby maimed for life!" Granger said, looking up at Allison with an expression of helpless agony that was pitiful

to see. "If it was only me, I could bear it without flinching; but the worst of it comes on those two helpless things, and I can't save them."

"It is hard, Granger. I understand your distress, but don't make it worse than it is. You will still have your child, and her very misfortune will endear her to you a hundred fold. Beside," he went on very earnestly, "I don't believe in *accidents*. This has been permitted with a purpose. God intends it to effect something. Let us be patient, and trust One who never makes a mistake; One who always works for our highest happiness, no matter how it looks to us. This has a bright side, though now we can't see it."

"I wish Lottie could think so. But when must the thing be done?"

"To-morrow, before Dr. C—— returns to New York. If you consent he will stay till afternoon, and perform the operation himself."

"Very well, let him do so," Granger said.

Allison took up his hat to go, but still lingered.

"I wish I could persuade you to take a more

cheerful view of this, if only for sake of your wife," he said.

"I'll try," Granger replied, with a feeble attempt at a smile.

"That's right," the doctor said, giving his hand a hearty grasp, and going away to arrange for the morrow.

Presently Granger got up and went to find Lottie. She was lying on the lounge in the library, her face hid in the pillows. He knelt down, and put his arms about her. He wanted to tell her about that bright side Allison had spoken of, but he knew, looking into his own heart, that to her there could be nothing bright about it. She could see some shades of difference between the blackness of losing their darling altogether, and keeping her on the hard terms that alone remained. This was all.

Poor Lottie! The happy, dancing flow of her life had suddenly fallen into a dark pool of sorrow, where it wildly beat about in its anguish, finding no outlet into the deeper, calmer channel, where it would presently sparkle in the brightness we can always see reflected in the glass of God's perfect love

for us, if we but fix the eyes of our faith steadfastly upon it.

Into this glass, the black aunty was looking, when she came to tell Lottie that Jennie was begging for mamma.

"O Missus, 'twont never do to take on dis way!" she said, as she heard the unsubmissive words Lottie uttered between her sobs. "You's got a Father lubs you a heap more'n you lub your poor little chile! Bress your heart, how drefful He must feel to hab to hurt you so! S'pose He'd do it if't could be helped? We's had to do some terrible hard things to our poor little lamb, jus' tryin' to cure her. 'Twas 'cause we lubed her we did 'em. Mebbe the blessed Lord sees that the devil's fixed a great stone so it's fell onter one of the legs of your precious soul, and hurt it so you can't get to Him, and He's tryin' to cure it. It hurts awful, I know, but you jus' be patient, and let him work. Now, honey, jus' you lie still in His hands, and stop a cryin', and come and comfort your baby."

Perhaps it was less the matter of old Han-

nah's homily, than its manner, so full of hearty sympathy, that had its effect on Lottie. She grew calmer, and presently went back to her suffering child. The little one put up her two little hands and patted the dear face that tried to smile as it bent over her.

"I loves 'ou busel," she said. "Peas laugh and be pitty, mamma. It make Jennie's leg ache w'en 'ou ki."

That was a long night to everybody in the cottage. Jennie was suffering and restless, but wonderfully patient for a baby with not three years' experience of life. Neither papa Ned nor Lottie left her. Mabel and Gretchen came and went, getting no rest. Blakemere was the only one who slept, for the dread of to-morrow kept even Elra awake.

Of the three who looked above, and beyond, she was one; Gretchen and black Hannah the others. Each in their way pleaded earnestly for strength and consolation to descend on the sufferers, who looked only at the present anguish, seeing in it no love.

The next morning Allison came early. After

much argument he persuaded the parents to leave their little one entirely in his care. "You know I will watch over her exactly as if she were mine," he urged. "You can do no good. The only effect of your presence will be to wring your hearts, and ours, too, knowing what you suffer."

So they yielded, letting Allison go alone to his little friend and patient.

The child brightened when she saw him.

"How's Jennie?" he asked, sitting down by the bed.

"I's tired," she said wearily.

"Tired of that naughty leg, I guess," he replied. "Don't you want me to carry it off, and then you can get up and go out of doors."

"Will 'ou?" she asked eagerly, then added in a changed tone. "'Ou tan't det it off. It towed on tight."

"Yes I can. I'll rip out all the stitches, as mamma did on that dolly that burned her foot, and then dear little Jennie will get well, and be a happy little girl again."

"I des that'll be pitty nice," she said, with

a sigh. "I was dood gird all night, 'tause papa Ned 'mended me. Peas tell me tory."

"I'm going to; the best one I can think of," Allison said, pouring ether on a sponge, and holding it so as slowly to affect the child, while he kept her attention by the story. He heard Dr. C—— below, and knew the time had come. Presently the baby said, speaking thick, "I deth I'th doin' to stheep." The weary eyes closed, and the little sufferer knew no more, till Allison had fulfilled his promise, till the stitches were all ripped out, and she was once more started on the road to health.

Of course it was a weary road, that to Lottie, was like walking among sharp thorns that constantly pierced her with fresh wounds.

The very feeling of the little maimed body as it rested on her lap, almost drove her wild with anguish. It was long before she could be induced to look on the remains of what was once so round and plump and beautiful. But Hannah, with the intuitive skill so peculiar to her simple but devout race persuaded her thus,—

"You musn't feel that way, honey, least-

ways you musn't give up to't. 'Tain't our feelins', but tother folks, we must think on. That's the way the blessed Jesus shew us. Whar'd we ben now, d'ye s'pose, if He'd said, 'I can't do this and I can't do that.' He went right 'long, and did what He saw we poor sinable creeturs needed. 'Twan't no matter how He felt, nor what He suffered. 'Twas all the time our pain, none of the time His pain He was tryin' to help. Now you's got to suffer a heap with this poor little creetur, but you musn't stop to think nothin' 'bout that, jus see what you can do ter help her."

And as infinite love led on to infinite self-sacrifice, so the mother love in Lottie's heart, set in the right way by these homely words, led her up to a plain of self-forgetfulness, of which before she had no idea. Standing on it, she began faintly to discern the meaning of sentences with whose sound she had been familiar all her days.

"Surely He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows. He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities."

This marvelous story, of which her Bible was so full, began to blossom into a living truth, and take hold of her heart as a verity, in which she had a personal concern. But what had the poor little crushed knee, the pitiful little stump to do with it? Why had the old black aunty's preaching more effect on the young mother, than the pulpit eloquence to which she had listened all her previous life?

Who can explain the mystery of that eternal life-germ so often sent to us wrapped up in sorrow? How strange that through the dark portal of this terrible anguish, Lottie's soul should pass to the green pastures and still waters, where is peace. Yet so it was. Not suddenly, but slowly, little by little, drawn gently and guided by aunt Hannah's simple words, to which she loved to listen as together they tended baby Jennie. Gretchen, too, who knew by heart, the choicest promises and bits of comfort all along God's words, delighted to read them over and over, for the old black nurse, who, unable to read herself, drank in their sweetness, with an ecstacy of refreshment known only to hungry souls.

Since the accident, the inmates of the cottage had been absorbed in their concern for baby Jennie and her parents. For a time, their own peculiar troubles had been put in the back-ground. Nevertheless, they still existed in full force.

Since Conrad Werner's death, Blakemere's moodiness had become almost savage. The sight of Dr. Allison seemed to exasperate him. Indeed, he avoided him as he would a pestilence, in which endeavor the doctor seemed ready to aid him in every possible way, though from the force of circumstances, as well as from a rapidly growing interest in some of its inmates, he was much at the cottage.

It was becoming plain to all, that Gretchen was very far from well. Her strength was failing. The spiritual look in her sweet face, was daily growing more apparent, and with it her gentle forbearance toward her wayward husband. The happiest moments of her life seemed those spent in reading the frequent letters that came to her from Charles. They were always full of the old love; they told the incidents of his daily life, but there was

never any lifting of the vail that hid — what she could not guess. And this, together with the grievous change in Philip, was literally undermining her very life.

Mabel still bore her burdens, in the pride of her unsubdued heart, out of which came frequent petulance, and scorn for all but Gretchen and poor Lottie, whom she now cherished with almost a mother's devotion. Even toward papa Ned, whose nature on its domestic side, was full of a blundering tenderness that led him constantly into doing the kindest things, at the very "wrong-est" times, she could not always conceal the vexation he excited. The only person who always soothed her, toward whom the loveliest side of her character seemed involuntarily to turn itself, was Dr. Allison. But why did he bring the jangle and discord of her being into harmony? What key-note did he strike to which all else was tuned? Was it not simply love, which when extended till it embraces God and all our race, becomes the fulfilling of the law?

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was one of June's loveliest days, when baby Jennie was first laid in the dainty carriage built for her by Granger's order. With his own hand he drew her about the lawn, while Lottie went by her side, and Dash, now just in the leanness and length of leg peculiar to canine youth, bounded on before. Now he would stop to bark frantically at some innocent bird high up among the leafiness overhead, and then frisk back, only to bound away again, in obedience to some new impulse of his dumb soul.

Jennie never tired of watching his gambols. She now lay laughing merrily, as he came bounding toward her, with a bit of rag in his mouth, which he shook and tossed in his glee till he seemed the very personification of fun

and frolic. Suddenly he stopped and gazed earnestly at the group who had halted under the shade of a large elm.

His dark eyes grew soft and sad; his silken ears dropped, and his whole attitude expressed the new mood that possessed him. Dropping his rag, he trotted demurely to the carriage, and began to lick the little hand put out to pat his dappled coat. Then, as if this did not fully express his feelings, he rested his paws on the side of the wagon, with a low whine, and began smelling of the little skirt under the lovely blue of whose folds the poor little remains of a leg lay hid. Then he tried to kiss the sweet face; but Jennie, not enjoying such endearments, pushed him off exclaiming,—

"Do 'way, Dash! I's itte gird. 'Ou's a dord. 'Ou musn't tiss anybody but dords!"

Thus repulsed, the poor fellow fell back on his haunches, and putting his brown head disconsolately on one side, let one long ear hang out, and wave slowly in the summer wind, while he vainly tried to comprehend the relative propriety of hand and face kissing for dogs.

A day or two before he had accidentally been present while Jennie's leg was being dressed. His curiosity was highly excited. He evidently understood that something was wrong, and this idea whenever it recurred to him, drew forth most tender and affectionate demonstrations toward her.

Of course these moods were evanescent, as in the present case; for seeing a large, majestic cat walking in stately fashion down the gravel path, Sir Dash, with inconsiderate haste, and it is to be feared, in a spirit of roguery that often led him to grief, approached her. He never quite understood how it came about, but in a trice Grimalkin was on his back, and the poor dog's head long bore the marks of her sharp claws. He never again attempted to trifle with this old and respectable inmate of the family. Henceforth, when duty or inclination led him past her, he crept along with head and tail depressed, and his body bowed, the concave side toward her, thankful, if possible, to escape a repetition of that first and well remembered lesson.

If he avenged himself, and asserted his

superiority to the average feline nature, by unmercifully chasing and worrying the "Squash," a timid, yellow cat, over whom even Grimalkin delighted to tyrannize, can he not find justification by pointing to many a man and woman who do precisely the same thing?

Having outgrown his babyhood, and with it many of his troublesome habits, he was now living at the cottage until he could be taken to his western home. Granger was highly delighted with this gift of Lottie's, and but for the pleasure it gave baby Jennie, would now have taken it back with him. Indeed, it was his wish to take both mother and child, but Allison would not hear to his little patient leaving the pure air and charming surroundings of Eau Claire, till she was entirely well. So Granger tried to submit cheerfully to whatever was best for his darling, though it seemed hard to endure any longer, the loneliness of his home. Poor Lottie also had a severe struggle before she could patiently bear to let him go back alone. Yet by what seemed so heavy a trial as the accident to their child, together with the thousand

acts of self-sacrifice it involved, they were being gradually lifted to a plane of self-control and cheerful acceptance of the inevitable, about which, they had before known very little. Their trouble had already begun to show its hidden brightness. It was making them perfect through that suffering which so often brings spiritual health, though how, the great Physician only knows.

"Now, Lottie, don't let Dash get the upper hands of you," Granger said, the morning he left. "If you can't manage him, ask Blakemere to help you."

"Poor old fellow," she said, patting him, as hearing his name, he sprang up and came to them. "He will be good."

Alas, for woman's faith!

Every night he was attended to his kennel and put to bed by baby Jennie, before she could content herself to go to sleep. Of course Sir Dash well knew it was a mere ceremony, yet he laid himself down with great apparent sleepiness, received Jennie's, "Dood night, dordy," and her last loving pat, with half shut eyes, and then waited quietly till she was fairly out

of sight on her way to bed, when he would spring up with a shake that settled both skin and collar, and go either to the parlor, library or music-room, to join the family until a proper bed-time for dogs and men.

With no one in the house was he a greater favorite than with poor Blakemere. We say *poor* Blakemere, because hardly another being could have been found who seemed more wretched than did he. Only with the dog did he seem to find relief.

When the business of the day was over, he would ramble with him for hours among the wooded hills that surrounded the town. He also taught him many tricks with which in his less moody tempers he loved to amuse the ladies of his household. Indeed, Dash had become his chosen, almost his only companion. Even his love for music seemed gone. The times when he and Gretchen sang together, were now rare indeed.

This was perhaps owing to the protest always entered by Dash to any attempt of the kind. No dread of punishment could prevent him from uttering an accompaniment of the most

dismal howls. It was in vain to punish him. Even with the rod ready to descend on his devoted skin, the striking of notes, the sound of a singing voice had a mysterious power to draw from him doleful cries which he seemed powerless to resist. Various ways were proposed to coax or compel him to keep silence, but they all failed, and finally when he saw the trial approaching, he would escape to some distant spot on the grounds, from whence his melancholy wailing came back to mingle faintly with the harmony.

Whether this unconquerable peculiarity was rooted in musical taste or distaste, nobody could tell. Blakemere often longed to penetrate the dog's mind, if he had one, to understand his thoughts, to hear him put in words the emotions so evident in his bright eyes and expressive actions. Indeed, everybody considered Dash as a privileged member of the household. He had his favorite corner on the sofa or seat in the easy-chair of every room. His chosen resting-place was by Jennie, on the bed, to which she always welcomed him with loving words, and pats of delight. He sat by at every meal,

eagerly watching the choice bits he was certain to get sooner or later. If kept too long in suspense, one paw came modestly upon the corner of the table by Blakemere's plate. If this failed to attract his attention, the other was added, and a minute more of waiting was sure to be followed by an imperative rap with paw number one, which generally set everybody laughing, and gained his point.

He was fond of slipping his collar at night, thus escaping from the chain that fastened him in his kennel. Like many another gifted being, he loved to view the landscape in the early dawn light, especially when *flocks* were abroad upon the hills.

He delighted to assist them in taking that matitudinal exercise in which he himself delighted. In the benevolence of his heart, he often urged them into running races with him, solely for their good, no doubt, but like many another philanthropist, his motives were impugned, not alone in the minds of the sheep themselves, but by their owners.

In the middle of a summer forenoon, he was resting from his benevolent exploits upon the

lawn, when a big, burly man, with bushy whiskers, appeared upon the scene, and spying Lottie, with her baby, on the piazza, he bade her a civil "Good morning."

"Is that 'are dog yourn?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," she replied promptly, with a mingling of pride and pleasure in her tone.

"He's a fine feller!" the man continued.

Lottie grew more pleased and proud. "He wants to [illegible] surprised," she soliloquized, gazing at the young cre[illegible] she sat developing into one of the most knowin[illegible] and [illegible]ant of his species. "He may as well understand he's not in the market."

"Yes," she replied, "we value him too highly to part with him."

"Did ye ever think as how he's purty hard on sheep?" inquired the man, with a short laugh. "He's ben and killed two on 'em for me."

Poor Lottie! She felt as if a bucket of cold water had suddenly been dashed over her. "Oh, dear! what shall I do!" she mentally ejaculated, for the moment almost as terrified as if the victims had been human. Then she tried to put a bold face on it.

"The dog's master is not here," she said, assuming an air of dignity that sat with ludicrous grace on the curly-headed, round-faced little lady.

"I thought you said he was yourn," the man replied with a cunning leer in his coarse eye.

"So I did. He is my husband's dog. We don't live here, but of course if he has done you any harm, Mr. Grangemis collarke it right."

Now Lottie had abchain thnuch idea of the value of sheep, as and Jeanne. Whether Dash, in his benevolent efforts, had involved his master to the amount of hundreds or thousands, she dared not think. In her perplexity she was seized by a bright thought. Possibly it wasn't Dash at all. She ventured to say as much.

"There ain't no other sich kind of a krittur raound here," he replied positively. "I'd swear to him in any court."

"Well, how much money will satisfy you?" she demanded in a sort of desperation.

"Wall, now, ye see them sheep was purty valable. One on 'em was abaout the best in

the hull lot." Every word was as an added cipher at the right hand of poor Lottie's calculations. Would it take all they had, to get out of this dreadful dilemma? "But I guess — wall, I dunno — would ye be willin' to guv me five dollars for 'em both?"

Five dollars! The revulsion of feeling produced by these words was so great, so sudden, that Lottie burst out laughing, in a way that much surprised her creditor.

"Here it is," she said, taking out her purse with great alacrity, and handing him the money. "We will try and keep the dog at home, hereafter. I'm very sorry he did you any mischief."

The man took his pay, and said good morning, in a dazed fashion, that quite puzzled Lottie.

"Wall, I never!" he ejaculated, as he walked away. "That air woman must have a heap of money to hand out the cash like that, so kinder cheerful, too. I never see anybody laugh so hard afore about partin' with a V."

After this it was thought best to appoint Dash his dormitory in a little room over the shed, in which was a dormer window opening

upon quite an extent of roof that sloped to within ten or twelve feet of the ground. It was not considered best to tighten his collar enough to prevent him from slipping it over his long, slender head, in his kindly care for inactive sheep. So he was imprisoned, and not chained. As the nights were warm, the window was left open, and for a time all went well. At the end of the first week, however, Lottie heard a strange sound in the grey of the morning, that, as she was but half awake, made her think the snow was sliding from the roof. Then she became fully awake, and knew it could not be that, as it was mid-summer, so she concluded the wood-pile had tumbled down, and then went fast asleep, again.

At the usual time, she went for Dash to come and pay his morning visit to Jennie, but he was not to be found.

Elra said when she opened his door to let him out, he was not there. But how did he escape? Through the window, of course; and so the wood-pile didn't fall, after all! In trying a morning ramble on the roof, he had doubtless slid off to the ground, and finding himself free, had gone — *where*?

Lottie's heart sank chill within her at the thought, and her relief was great, when in the course of an hour he appeared in company with a young collegian whom she knew.

"Oh, we've had such a time!" he exclaimed, on entering. "This fellow overtook me on my way to prayers at the college chapel, this morning, and insisted on going with me. I tried to send him back, but it wasn't any use. Of course I shut him out of the building, but a late comer left the doors all open, and in he walked with the most sprightly and engaging manner possible. You know our President is dignity personified, and when he saw the amusement on all our faces, he waved his hand majestically for some one to take the intruder out. Dash saw the motion, and supposed the President intended him a special honor by it, so he obeyed what he considered its meaning, and trotted off promptly to the platform, walked up the steps, and deliberately sat himself down by the side of the great man. He surveyed the assembly with great gravity from his position, and was evidently determined not to be overmuch elated by this distinguished honor, but to bear it meekly.

I don't believe the presence of every President in the land could have kept back the shout we raised at the ludicrousness of this scene, and ours was wise enough to let it have its way. When the force of it was a little spent, he said, 'Young gentlemen, this is a splendid animal. He has behaved with great dignity under new and doubtless to him trying circumstances. Let us not be behind him, in maintaining proper gravity when the occasion calls for it. Mr. Lovejoy, you will remove the dog, and guard him carefully until prayers are over. We will then see to whom he belongs.'

But the thing was easier said than done. Lovejoy whistled and called. Dash only wagged the tip end of his tail, and looked up anxiously at the President. He said, 'Go, sir!' The dog rose up and followed Lovejoy out, with the most hurt, crest-fallen air imaginable, which put the finishing touch on as comical a scene as ever I saw in my life."

"Your description certainly is comical," Lottie said, "but oh, Dash, Dash, what shall we do with you, you irrepressible puppy!"

"You will have to rusticate him on the farm,

where he spent his babyhood," suggested Mabel.

"No, we can't spare him," Gretchen objected. "With all his capers, he is the most gentle, docile, affectionate of friends. Let us return his devotion, by remembering that 'a friend should bear a friend's infirmities.'"

"And give him some breakfast, beside," Mabel added, seeing how hungry the poor animal looked after the fatigue and excitement of the morning.

As she went away toward the kitchen, followed by Dash, Dr. Allison drove to the door. He came in to say good morning, and inquire for his little patient.

"The day is perfect," he said. I have to drive several miles into the country, over a charming road. Won't somebody go with me?"

He looked at Gretchen. She smiled and shook her head. "Thank you, doctor, not to-day," she said.

"Mrs. Granger is always ready for a ride," he ventured, turning to her.

"Yes, always," she replied merrily, "especially when she has a long letter to write to her

good, patient husband, and ever so many other things to do beside."

"Well, here is a lady of leisure," he persisted, turning to Mabel, as she came back from her attendance on Dash. "You surely will not refuse me."

"Refuse you what?" she asked, with a scarcely perceptible heightening of her color and brightening of her eye.

"To ride into the country, with me, this lovely morning. I made these ladies the tempting offer, and both refused."

"'What fate imposes, men must needs abide,'" she rejoined with mock gravity.

"Yes, and so in this case be condemned to that 'Solitude where all good qualities grow sick and die.'"

"Oh, dear, if that is to be the terrible end, I'll go out of mere humanity," she answered laughing, as she went for her hat.

Gretchen and Lottie saw them drive away, and looked at each other smiling, but spoke never a word. The birds cocked their bright eyes at them and sang merry roundelays as they went by. The summer winds followed them,

Ride into the Couutry. Page 246.

whispering mysteriously among the leaves and waving grain. The flowers looked up at them and sent forth a benediction of fragrance. The brook leaped gaily, and babbled of them to the willow on the brink. But ask them what we will, no hint will they give of what was said or done on that ride. Those morning hours are to them a sacred, holy time, with which the stranger intermeddleth not. All we know about it is that from that time Dr. Allison was received at the cottage very much as one of them by all but Blakemere.

Upon Mabel herself, this new state of things produced a very marked change. In the sunshine of this newly confessed love, much of her pride and bitterness vanished. Allison had always the power of bringing out the brightest, sweetest side of her character, and now that he had come into so close relation to it, he grew even more earnest in his study of its weaknesses, that if possible he might cure them.

His love for Mabel was singularly noble and unselfish. He regarded her as God's best earthly gift to him, for the care of which he held himself responsible; and he constantly

sought to remove the barrier that separated her from God, and shut her up to the disquietude she had so long endured. At first, she met these attempts with an impenetrable reserve, the outcome of that pride which had so long held her back from peace. But finally his gentle persistence overcame her. Suddenly she yielded to the impulse she had always felt, to lay bare to him her heart-sickness, and ask his counsel.

"My poor darling!" he said tenderly, drawing her into his arms. "You are just in the position of a little child, who, knowing that he is in the wrong, will still refuse to obey his father because — may I say it, dear? — because of the naughty stubbornness of his own will. He will not admit this. He will make any excuse but the right one. And in just this spirit you argue that God is arbitrary, because He demands of reasonable creatures assent and obedience to so many declarations and commands, the truth and necessity of which He does not deign to explain. Now if the little child should argue thus against submission to its mother, you would at once

see and condemn his folly. Nay, more, you would say the proper remedy for him was a birch rod."

At this Mabel put her hand over his mouth. "And so for consistency's sake you expect me meekly to endure, while you scourge me with your tongue, in place of a stick?"

"Hardly that," he replied, taking down the hand and kissing it, "God forbid that a poor 'sinable' creetur like me, as aunt Hannah has it, should assume that attitude toward any mortal, much less toward one whom I so esteem and love; but what I want to show you, is, that the wise mother requires obedience, because in this way she will secure her child's highest happiness. She can't make this plain to him. It is above his childish comprehension. If he obeys, he will find it true, but he will not understand why. Just so it is with us. God deals with finite beings on an infinite plan; infinite in love, in wisdom, in perfect adaptation to their wants, not alone for time, but also for eternity. How can He explain it to them? How could they understand it if he made the attempt. He says,

'Obey, and ye shall be happy; disobey, and inevitably if the first statement is true, ye shall be unhappy. We all admit that if a thing is good, its opposite must be evil. We never stop to prove it. Now, darling, God's requirements are never arbitrary. They come of necessity, from his infinite love for us and desire for our happiness. Oh, when we realize who God is, the vast moral distance there is between him and us, and yet that he so cares for us as to make it true that in him we live and move and have our being, is it wise, is it generous to withhold from him the love, the trust he asks from us? Shall we not rather accept with unutterable gratitude the mercy he offers us, accept it without cavil, on his own terms, giving ourselves up to him entirely, only too thankful if he will condescend to train us into fitness for his kingdom above?"

Allison spoke from the very centre of his heart, and perhaps the silent falling of Mabel's tears was a better answer than any her lips could have framed.

Her thought was, "Can this be God's recompense for all these months of conflict with

him, begun far back, when I put out of sight my mother's record of her life, and went to my prayerless rest? Is it by the hand of him I love best on earth that God would draw me to himself? Is it through the ever-present influence of this strong yet gentle nature, that I am to be led up step by step to the obedience and love of which he speaks?"

Truly Allison had probed the wound, but now it would begin to heal.

Gretchen watched these spiritual changes with silent pleasure and thanksgiving.

We have elsewhere said of her that she seemed to exhale holiness as does the lily its fragrance. Her office in the world seemed to be simply to hold before it the beauty of her own pure life, never to argue, exhort or reprove, scarcely to persuade. Nor was she to blame for this any more than is the lily for not having the medicinal qualities of the gentian. Yet she did not the less rejoice when the dear ones about her came into sympathy with the motive power of her life, love to God. She only grieved that Philip, for whom she would have given her life itself, was the only one of all the household who refused to come to the light.

Thus the checkered life of our dramatic personæ flowed on, baby Jennie being the only one who knew no sorrow.

Dear child! as yet she did not understand the life-long trial in store for her. She was supremely happy in her carriage or the arms that were always ready to carry her whithersoever she would. With mamma, Dash and old aunt Hannah at her beck, she wanted for nothing, and before the summer was spent, she had regained almost her old, rosy plumpness.

CHAPTER XX.

AS anxiety for Jennie lessened, it grew strong in the direction of Gretchen. She began to show symptoms of a serious nature, and Allison watched her with evident concern. He tried various remedies with little or no effect, and at last he said one day to Mabel,—

"It is useless to expect any improvement in Mrs. Blakemere, unless she can have entire change of scene."

"Oh, I hope that isn't so!" Mabel answered. "She would never leave home without Philip, and just now he is more than usually needed at the bank."

"So much the better, Mabel. I need not hesitate to say to you that the very best remedy

for her, is to get her away from him. We have a tacit understanding to be silent on these matters, but you know as well as I that anxiety and grief are at the bottom of these physical troubles."

"I do, indeed!" Mabel replied sadly, her eyes filling with tears. "How I wish Charles were here! I know she pines for him continually, though she never says so."

"Very likely; but his being here would only make things worse," the doctor answered hastily, then checked himself, as Mabel looked at him in surprise.

"You know," he went on, "he would never endure Blakemere's treatment of his wife. From my soul I pity the man, but his conduct is shameful. He is as surely killing Gretchen as though he were poisoning her."

Mabel said nothing. Even to Allison she could not speak of this skeleton in the family closet. Yet afterward, she thought much about his words. She fancied they indicated a more intimate knowledge of their past troubles than she supposed possible to him. Why had he spoken so hastily about matters being made

worse if Charles were there? What followed, though evidently intended to account for his words, did not do so. She was sure he kept something back. Yet, he was almost a stranger in Eau Claire, when these domestic clouds arose, and certainly knew nothing beyond what rumor gave him. It was, after all, only a nervous fancy on her part, to imagine he meant more than he said. Yet even while she tried thus to quiet herself she felt sure her fancy had the best of the argument. One thing was certain, however, he did say the best thing for Gretchen was change, absence from home, and she resolved the thing should be in some way arranged.

"Suppose we go home with Lottie," she said one day, as Gretchen sat sewing on a coarse apron she was making for one of a family of poor children, whose mother had just died. "You know Ned is coming for her in a fortnight, and just imagine how charmed they would be to have our company back."

"Perhaps now they wouldn't," Gretchen answered with her quiet smile. "I shouldn't wonder if they were heartily tired of us by this time."

"Do you judge others by yourself?" Lottie asked gaily.

"By no means, dear!" Gretchen replied earnestly, troubled at the mischievous turn thus given to her words. "I don't know what we will do without you and the darling baby."

"Well, then, why won't you think seriously of Mabel's plan. Nothing would delight Ned and me more."

"Oh, you know I wouldn't go without Philip, and he is just now too busy to be spared. I'll try and lend Mabel, though, if the doctor will consent."

"Thank you," Mabel replied. "The doctor is just the one who put it into my head. He says a journey is the very best medicine you can have."

She did not reply at once. When she spoke there were tears in her voice.

"Perhaps he is right, if the way led across the ocean to dear Charlie," she said.

Then one by one the big drops gathered and fell upon her work. With her life ebbing away faster than any but herself knew, with her strength failing almost from day to day, she

could no longer entirely hide her heart's hunger for the twin brother she so loved. Had Mabel's spirit been still as proud and repellant as it was before God's grace began to soften it, had Lottie been still the thoughtless being Gretchen found her on her return from Europe, she might have nerved herself to bear on in silence. But there was now between the three, a strong bond of sympathy that almost unconsciously drew them nearer together, and made Gretchen shrink less from giving them a glimpse of her secret sorrows, and when Mabel came and folded her arms about her, she burst into a passion of weeping that shook her fragile form from head to foot. Mabel made no effort to soothe her. She knew this outburst, so unusual, so unexpected, was the very relief her long pent up feelings required, so she waited silently, till its force was spent, with only an occasional kiss on the pale cheek. Lottie stood by with a face full of sympathy, holding one of Gretchen's wan hands in both her own, which were plump and dimpled, and white.

Presently Mabel said, "Dear Gretchen, why shouldn't you go to Germany? It is the very

thing. I wonder we have not thought of it before."

"O Mabel, please don't!" Gretchen exclaimed. "I ought not to have said it. You know Philip can't leave."

"But you can go without him. He will spare you if he thinks your health requires it."

"Possibly. But I couldn't go alone!" she answered, trying to laugh.

"No, but I will go with you. Nothing would delight me more. Together we would get on nicely. Beside, if Charles knew we were coming, he would meet us when we landed, and escort us to Leipsic."

"All beautifully planned, but not practicable, I'm afraid," Gretchen answered. "Nevertheless, you are a dear, unselfish sister, thus to be ready to sacrifice yourself for me. Allison would hardly consent, though, I'm thinking."

"We will see," Mabel replied, kissing her.

"If you will go," chimed in Lottie, "I will stay and look after these lone, lorn men till you get back. You wouldn't want to stay all winter, would you?"

"No, indeed," Mabel exclaimed, "we're

only planning for a few weeks' pleasuring; you know Americans can do all Europe in three months."

"Come, girls, please don't say any more about it," begged Gretchen. "I love and thank you both, but it can't be."

At this moment Blakemere opened the door and looked in.

"Confound the dog, where is he!" he exclaimed, impatiently, then seeing that something unusual was passing, he fixed his eyes keenly on Gretchen for a moment, and then glanced angrily at the others. "What's the matter?" he demanded, roughly.

"Nothing, sir," Mabel replied, with much of the old fire in her eye, "We are trying to persuade Gretchen to follow the doctor's advice, and leave home awhile for change of air, but she says you can't go, and so she prefers to stay."

"Nonsense! Tell Allison to mind his own business," Blakemere answered savagely.

"He thinks he does, Mr. Blakemere, when he prescribes what he knows will do his patients most good," Allison replied, quietly,

stepping in from the piazza, upon which he had come just in time to hear Mabel's words, and Philip's reply.

"Well, sir, Mr. Blakemere thinks that Dr. Allison is a prying, meddling coxcomb, who, but for decency's sake, he would kick out of doors," was the insulting rejoinder.

"O Philip, Philip!" Gretchen cried, springing toward him. Her face was white with terror. She tottered, and would have fallen, had not her husband caught her in his arms. She did not faint, but lay with her eyes shut, gasping for breath.

"Bring her to this window," Allison said, authoritatively.

Blakemere obeyed, and laid her tenderly on the sofa. He was nearly as pale as she. "Will she die?" he asked, hoarsely. All were too busy applying restoratives to heed him, but Gretchen slowly opened her eyes, and smiled into his face. "Not yet, dearest," she murmured.

When she partially recovered, she was carried to her room, which she was unable to leave for several days. She thought she

would have been willing to remain there the rest of her life, if thus she could prolong the tenderness with which Blakemere treated her. But for an unspoken contrition in look and tone, a contrition almost pitiful to see, she might have fancied they were back in the old happy days, before they were so unexpectedly summoned home from Lausanne.

But, alas, she well knew this devotion was but for the time; presently, things would fall into the old way again.

This was, however, not to be. The sudden attack which so alarmed all the inmates of the cottage, had this good effect, that it brought matters to a crisis, concerning the proposed journey for Gretchen.

The very night after it occurred, Mabel told Allison of the little scene that preceded his coming, and the almost inadvertent way in which Gretchen had exposed her yearning to go to her brother.

"I wish it could be gratified," he replied. "Probably nothing could be better for her."

"I proposed to go with her," Mabel said. "Can you spare me?"

"Dear girl!" he answered, "I would be the last one to object if it were best, but Gretchen's traveling companion should be a careful, experienced man. You hardly realize her condition, which is not strange, she is so cheerful and uncomplaining. I am now convinced that the principal trouble is with the heart, which will make her liable to sudden attacks similar to the one she has just had. She must be relieved of all anxiety by the way, and kept as calm as possible. For these and other reasons, I could never consent to your going with her alone."

"Yes, you are right," Mabel replied, sadly. "But what can we do? Some way must be found to carry her to Charles."

"I have a plan, Mabel," Allison said, taking her hand. "I have had it in mind for weeks, though what you have told me to-night has given it a more definite form. Can we not, for Gretchen's sake, change the day of our wedding, which is now fixed for mid-winter, to the present time, and so making it suitable for me to take you both to Germany? Don't answer me yet," he went on,

without waiting for the impetuous protest he saw ready to burst forth. "Think of it a little first, and remember, that I urge it in view of peculiar circumstances, before which everything else should yield. I have not spoken of this before, because I was not sure of being able to leave my business; but to-day I have heard from a friend of mine, a skillful physician, who has just returned from studying abroad, that he will take my practice while I am away. Now, darling, if you consent, all can be arranged."

And Mabel did consent; not then, but finally, after a careful consideration of all the pros and cons, and much gentle persuasion from Allison.

To the surprise of all, Blakemere advocated the plan warmly, which removed Gretchen's sole objection. He seemed eager to adopt any measure likely to benefit his wife, but he expressed no wish to accompany her, nor did she say she desired it. In all this there was something wholly unaccountable, especially to Lottie. She wondered what would reconcile papa Ned to let her go from him, across

the sea, were she sick like Gretchen. She was certain nothing would tempt her to do it. Blakemere at first opposed her remaining with him while Gretchen was absent, but his gentle wife urged it so strongly, on the ground of her own relief from anxiety on his account, that he yielded. So Lottie again postponed, in a spirit of genuine self-sacrifice, her return to Granger and the delights of her western home.

Two bridals beside the one with which our story opens, had been solemnized at the cottage. Two Mabels, mother and daughter, had there taken the vows that bound them, "For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, till death do us part." Now the third Mabel, child and grandchild, was to tread in their footsteps.

All things were ready for departure. Granger had come, partly to be present at the ceremony, but more to solace himself with a sight of his sweet wife, and dear unfortunate, but very merry baby. He also brought a sister of his own, to help them through the time of Gretchen's absence, by her bright face and sunny ways.

Gretchen had regained her usual calm self-poise, since the one day, when for a little, it had failed her. Unutterable gratitude to everybody for smoothing her way to Charles, seemed now to be her predominant feeling. It looked from her eyes, it spoke in the tones of her voice, and often framed itself into words.

Her tenderness toward Philip increased, if that were possible, while his for her never wavered during the rapid preparations for her journey. He even forced himself to consult with Allison as to the best arrangements for her comfort on the voyage. Thus they came to a bright September morning, when, in the presence of a few friends, Mabel Flopstock and Richard Allison were married.

Only the fair bride knew what this change in her wedding day had cost her. Of a highly imaginative nature, she had loved to fancy herself drifting slowly toward it on a gentle tide, surrounded by the rose hues and fragrance in which her soul seemed bathed by the consciousness of Allison's love. In reality, she came to it suddenly, not as the central, beatific hour of her earthly existence,

to which she was free to concentrate every feeling and emotion, but as an incident on the way in which she walked entirely for the sake of another, who, reason as she would, had seemingly come between Allison and herself, because, for her sake, he had urged her to overcome all scruples to their immediate marriage.

"Oh, selfishness! How the net work of thy slender, but strong fibres, spreads itself through the human heart, ready to catch even our best motives and desires, until we grow faint with struggling to free them."

Mabel strove to subdue these fancies. She reasoned with, laughed at, or tried to forget them, but they tormented her still. At last she took refuge in confession to Allison himself. He was so gentle, yet so wise, so clear sighted in these difficult soul problems, she was fast learning to confide them all to him.

He listened to this one, not in amusement, as she expected, but gravely, almost reverently.

"Dear soul!" he said. "Can it be that I have power to wake such fancies in your thought? Fancies so bright, it gives you all

this pain to part with them? God help me! What if I should trifle, or be thoughtless, or, worse by far, in wantonness wound such love as yours! But, darling, if, as you say, your selfishness is being disciplined by our hasty marriage, mine is being gratified. I have all along been afraid that my plan had its origin in this rather than in benevolent care for my patient. I was suspicious of its value on that very ground. So, while you accuse yourself because of your reluctance, I do the same thing because of my eagerness. So far from its being to me only an incident by the way, I am in great danger of making it the great event which will cast everything else into the shade. I am sometimes afraid I shall fail in care for the invalid, through selfish absorption in my own happiness."

Perhaps Allison's words were hardly a rebuke to Mabel's selfishness, but they had a wonderful effect nevertheless. She grew strangely satisfied with things as they were. She began to suspect that her trouble had been not so much a dread lest she should be forced to regard her marriage as merely incidental, as that he

would do so. Now that she had sounded his feelings and found them more profound than she had imagined, her trouble was ended. Looking back upon her marriage from the beyond, full as it was of care for Gretchen, she felt that it had realized to her her most poetic dreams. The one accidental moment which found her alone with Allison after the solemn ceremony was over, when his arms were about her, and she heard his voice saying, "Mabel, my own precious wife!" condensed into itself a joy exceeding her fondest anticipations. Henceforth she could give herself unreservedly to Gretchen.

CHAPTER XXI.

SELF-SUPERINTENDENCE! That a thing should overlook itself! Is not this a paradox, and hard to be understood? It is indeed difficult, and to the imbruted sensualist, a direct contradiction; and yet most truly does the poet exclaim,—

> '— Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how mean a thing is man!'"

Herr Humbert had said of himself, when on the mountain-side he secured Franse as his secretary, that he was too busy to keep guard over himself, and he spoke a more profound truth than he knew. "For alas! the largest part of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home." Neither was he any exception to this rule. With all his varied learning, his knowl-

edge of Herr Hiendrich Humbert was very slight. But suddenly, by the abrupt suspension of his physical powers, his attention was driven inward. The whole force of his mental activity was, as it were, instantly turned upon himself, and this when he stood face to face with a foe from which he had always shrunk with singular dread, but from whom there seemed now little hope of escape.

Coleridge says that "in countries enlightened by the Gospel, the most frequent impediment to men's turning their minds inward upon themselves is that they are afraid of what they shall find there. There is an aching hollowness in the bosom, a dark cold speck at the heart, an obscure and boding sense of a Somewhat that must be kept out of sight of the conscience, some secret lodger, whom they can neither resolve to eject or retain."

Alas, for the unhappy being who, when weak in body and sick at heart, is forced to behold this secret lodger in the light of an awakened conscience!

Thus week after week did Herr Humbert's powerful mind prey upon itself with no relief,

no solace save that afforded by Margaret's sacred readings and sweet hymns. Why these comforted him he hardly knew; but so it was.

Charles marveled at the sweet girl's perseverance in a ministry that seemed to him so utterly useless, and he was greatly surprised when on the morning following the discovery connected with the bronze statue, as he sat with the sick man he suddenly turned to him and said, "Charles, I want you to go out and buy me a Bible. Then I want you to read it aloud to me from beginning to end. Whether it is what Margaret believes it or not, she has convinced me that it is a sublime book, well worth my attention. Wouldn't it be strange, boy, if after I had spent all my days searching for truth, a girl should show me something better worth knowing than all the rest?"

Franse made some slight answer and went at once on the errand, though it was not wholly agreeable to him. With the tiny lettering on that white warrior's shield ever forming itself into words before the eyes of his mind, words he tried to forget, but that haunted him continually, words pregnant with meaning,

no doubt, but which he did not understand, he shrank from plunging into the full stream from which the rill had been drawn.

To read the Bible aloud to Herr Humbert, seemed to him like throwing a strong light upon some hidden place, which we more than half suspect to be full of things from the sight of which we shrink. He did not care to take the candle of the Lord and walk through the secret chambers of his soul, much less to go with the scientist through his.

It cannot be denied that these were but morbid fancies springing from a mind thoroughly disordered by sudden separation from all it loved, under singularly trying circumstances. It is with the soul as it is with the body, which will resist disease even when there is a strong natural tendency toward it, so long as its surroundings are healthy and its general tone can be kept sound; but change all this, and the malady will at once begin to show itself. So, now, the natural haughtiness inherent in the soul of young Franse, and that rebellion against revealed truth so inseparable from pride, were making themselves felt, in many pain-

ful ways. But as those diseases are most to be dreaded that give no sign, let us hope this soul-sickness will so manifest itself as to claim attention and find a cure.

When Franse returned from the book-store, he found Margaret Liebnitz sitting by the invalid and amusing him with a lively anecdote about one of his numerous friends, none of whom, by the way, had he allowed to come into his presence since he was stricken with paralysis. For the first time since his illness, he was laughing heartily.

"Tell it again, tell it again," he said in his slow, difficult speech. "I wan't Charles to enjoy it, too."

Margaret obeyed with a quiet humor that Franse thought very charming. When the merriment subsided, the invalid asked, changing the subject abruptly, as was his habit, "Why didn't you tell me about that bronze figure I gave you? Margaret says it is the most beautiful, wonderful thing she ever saw."

"I thought you wouldn't care about it," Charles replied, somewhat embarrassed by the question.

"I shouldn't, if I could be back at my work," he answered peevishly, "but now I want to see it."

Charles swallowed the objection that sprang to his lips, and went away to fetch it. Soon the pure white figure stood forth in the morning light.

"It is just as exquisite now as it was by gas-light," Margaret said, looking up at Franse with her quiet, soulful eyes, utterly unconscious it was she and not the marble he was admiring. "I was afraid it would lose it's spiritual look in broad daylight; but it doesn't."

"Not at all, that I can see," he replied, with what seemed to her a lamentable want of enthusiasm.

"Well, there's one curious thing about it," Herr Humbert said, "which is that any man should be willing to waste his time upon a thing like that, when probably he didn't know one ingredient of the marble on which he worked."

"And no doubt both Lombardo and Antonio would wonder exceedingly why any man in his senses should be always pulling things to pieces, when beauty is so much better than science,"

Margaret returned, laughing. "Beside, this was wrought with a high and holy purpose; it illustrates a very striking passage of Scripture." As she spoke, her face took on that reverent look which it unconsciously wore whenever she spoke of sacred things.

"Well, now, explain it to me," the Herr said in his imperative way, which the young folks had learned meant the same as does "If you please," in a more polite, but perhaps less honest mouth.

"With pleasure," Margaret replied, beginning at once to unfold the design of both bronze and marble.

"But, child, those words on the shield seem like nonsense. What sense is there in talking about the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit and all that?"

Margaret looked perplexed, and did not answer at once.

"A knowledge of the Bible would bring out their meaning," she said at last, with some hesitation.

"Can't you explain 'em?" he demanded impatiently.

"Hardly; at least it would take some time."

"How long?"

"Days, perhaps."

"Very well, then, take days and do it," he replied. "Beside, here is a Bible Charles has just bought me. He is going to read it to me from beginning to end. I'm going to see which knows most, you or I."

This was the first intimation Margaret had received that her labor of love was not wholly lost. Her heart glowed with joy, and threw it's reflection into her face, as she exclaimed fervently, "Thank God!"

"Wait a bit, wait a bit. You may get the worst of it," he answered, half peevishly.

"No, I'm certain that cannot be," she said, with an implicit confidence in the truth of her belief which was always a marvel to Franse.

He said nothing. He was restless and uncertain. He envied Margaret her calm assurance of faith, while, at the same time, he believed it could easily be shaken, if put to the test of argument or investigation. He longed to see it thus tried, and yet he would

not on any consideration be the one to do it. Now he believed Herr Humbert was about to try the experiment, and he resolved to watch the combat closely.

Margaret looked at her watch. "I must go," she said. "I promised to spend the day with Fraulein Hine."

"I suppose she's sick, or you wouldn't do it," the Herr remarked, in a tone half admiring, half angry, which he always used in speaking of Margaret's nonsensical benevolence, as he chose to call it.

"Yes; she is mostly confined to her bed, with spinal disease, and thinks she could not get on at all without an occasional visit from me. Silly, isn't she?" Margaret added, with a roguish twinkle in her eye.

"Come, come! You think because you can talk faster than I can, that you have the best of me, but you just look in the glass, and you'll see you never was made to go round sitting all day in dirty courts and alleys, nursing sick women and babies."

"I don't know about that," she replied, merrily. "If I spent much time before the

glass, I am afraid I should feel obliged to go by way of penance, and stay all night. Now, I go because I love to, and I very seldom stay even all day, so I don't believe there would be any gain in following your advice. See these flowers,"—opening a little basket. "I always carry some. The Fraulein says they are God's smiles to her."

"Well, to my thinking, Margaret Liebnitz is the sweetest flower that ever grew," the Herr exclaimed, in a sudden burst of admiration.

Margaret blushed at this outspoken compliment, and was glad Franse had left the room before it was uttered.

She laughed gaily, however, exclaiming, "Dear me! This will never do. Now, to make amends, you must listen to a request grandma wishes me to make. She is obliged to go to Weissenfels on some business. You know she dislikes traveling in a public conveyance; therefore, she intends to take a private carriage with four seats. As she likes company, she has invited her old friend, Herr Lenz, to go, and her request is, that you will

spare Herr Franse, provided he accepts the vacant seat she means to offer him. She thinks the change will do him good, and Simon will stay with you till his return, which will be in two or three days, at the most. We may be back sooner."

"*We!* So you are going too, are you? Do you think I'm to be left to myself three whole days without either you or Charles?"

"That seems to be grandma's idea," she replied, merrily, well knowing that the Herr was affecting most of his apparent dismay.

"Well, tell her I never would have believed she was capable of proposing such a selfish thing; but she's right, about it's doing the boy good. He's been tied up here quite too long. Yes, make him go by all means. I shall do well enough with Simon."

Margaret would gladly have added to her thanks for his compliance, the wish that he were able to join the party: but she well knew that such courtesies vexed, instead of pleasing him. So she merely said good bye, and went away before Franse returned.

When he did so, Herr Humbert greeted

him thus: "So, boy, they're going to rob me of you, it seems."

"How is that, sir?" Charles inquired, not comprehending the remark.

"Why, Madam Liebnitz and Margaret are going to carry you off to Weissenfels to-morrow."

"It is the first I've heard of it."

"Well, they are, and I'm glad of it. 'Twill do you good. Simon's going to stay with me."

"You seem to consider it settled that I shall accept the invitation, when it comes," Charles said, considerably amused. "It certainly is not wise to refuse it beforehand. Probably it is for this that Madam sent me word to call on her to-night."

"Of course it is. And now don't let me hear anything about refusing. Where's that book? Let's begin it."

Charles sat down, took it up, and began to read at the first verse of the book of Genesis. On and on he went, through many chapters, with no word of comment from his listener, who, he saw, was, nevertheless, giving the closest attention.

At last he said, abruptly, "That's enough. I can think it over while you're gone. I'm tired now. I'll lie down."

Charles closed the volume with alacrity, and calling the housekeeper, they together supported the tottering figure to the bed-room, and laid it tenderly to rest.

It was a daily marvel to Franse, how so strong and active a soul as that of his feeble friend, could be maintained in so shattered a body. It seemed to set at naught all his preconceived ideas of the connection between spirit and matter. He was fast becoming aware that he was far from having gained perfect knowledge in any direction. All the foundations were breaking up, leaving him tossing about in a perfect sea of uncertainty. His mental cry was ever, "What is truth?"

But, despite all this, the prospect of a break in the tedious monotony of his life was very delightful; for, if it had been wearisome to him when busy with the work he came to do, cheered, as it was, by association with the usually genial scientist, what must it be now, when almost wholly devoted to a helpless, and often vexatious invalid?

So, after all, the invitation was virtually accepted before it was given, and the evening found him at Madam Liebnitz's door.

She welcomed him with a motherly kindness which he always found most captivating. The home feeling it roused in this strange land was like a rest to his soul-weariness. Margaret, too, was there, an unusual circumstance, as he very seldom saw her when he went to the house. Her days were so filled with the benevolent work she had chosen, as to leave her but little time for study or reading; and she often devoted hours, in which she was sure her grandmother was well entertained, to pursuits for which she had a strong desire.

"Margaret told you my plan for to-morrow, I believe?" Madam L. said.

"No, I learned it from Herr Humbert," Charles replied.

"And he discouraged your going?"

"Not at all. On the contrary, he urged it."

"He is more self-sacrificing than I expected," she returned. "So now we may consider it certain that you will go, may we not?"

"I am hardly sure that I should be right to leave him."

"You will be just right," the old lady returned, positively. "By going you will do him as much good as yourself. You will come back a much better companion, for the rest and recreation. Nobody is proof against the depressing effects of such close confinement. If you don't believe me, ask this young doctress."

"He wouldn't need to ask me, if he had ever heard any of my gratuitous lectures to those who have the care of my sick people. If the poor sufferers can't get out themselves into the fresh air and sunshine, there is all the more need that those about them should do so, that they may bring back some of the health-giving influences to their patients. I try to persuade them to combine just as much sunshine, freshness, fragrance and beauty in themselves as is possible. It is ten times more efficacious than medicine."

"You not only preach, but practice," Charles said.

"I try to," she answered, simply. "I make

even my dress a study, so that while it is adapted to my work, it shall also give pleasure by its form and color. When I can attract the attention of a sick woman or child, enough to have them exclaim, 'How pretty! What a lovely color!' I am delighted, for I have certainly done them good."

"I wish every lady studied dress from as worthy a motive," Franse replied.

"Perhaps more do than we think," she said. "We are not very well read in other people's motives."

"This is all a digression," exclaimed Madam Liebnitz. "Are you going, or not? Because, as we start early to-morrow morning, we must make our arrangements now."

"I'm certainly going, and thank you, too," Franse replied. So it was agreed that the ladies should call for him as early as possible.

"If we were coming later in the day, I should beg very hard to be allowed to go in and see my old friend," the dear old lady continued. "How much better it would be for him to see his numerous acquaintances. By indulging this morbid sensitiveness, he

deprives himself of a large share of pleasure and relief."

"That is certainly so," Charles replied, "And yet one can hardly blame him, he is so terribly changed."

"That is what Margaret says. By the way, she tells me he asked to see the bronze to-day, and that his curiosity is aroused about its meaning and design. She came home overflowing with delight that at last he feels even this much interest. But the crowning joy is to find him with a Bible, which he intends to hear read through. She thinks now she is sure of him."

"You may be right," Franse said, turning to address Margaret, but she had left the room. "I was going to say," he went on, speaking to Madam Liebnitz, "that if I am not mistaken, the Herr intends to bring all the powers of his mind to bear on this subject. Once get him thoroughly aroused in any direction, and he is never diverted till he comes to some result that, at least, satisfies himself. I am not sure that a feminine mind, unused to severe reasoning, will be a match for him."

"Do you remember the stripling that slew the giant with a smooth stone in a sling?" asked Madam Liebnitz. "So it may be with Margaret."

"Yes, I remember, and I am very eager to witness the combat. I shall not submit to being sent away, as I have heretofore."

"It will certainly be for her advantage to let you stay. As you consider her the weaker party, your manhood will compel you to take up on her side."

"I'm afraid my help wouldn't amount to much," he allowed, in a half remorseful tone, of which his hostess took no notice, but began to speak of Herr Lenz.

"He has had to make his own way in life, but, notwithstanding, he has attained considerable eminence both as a man of business and a student. His domestic trials have been terrible. Derangement came into his family through his wife. For twenty years she lived in a half-crazed condition, and during that time a son and two daughters died raving maniacs. But he was so tender of them all, that he could not be induced to place any of them in an

asylum. You can imagine what his home must have been. They are all dead now, and he is left, at the age of seventy, nearly alone in the world. His trials have not made him misanthropical, however; he is as genial and mellow as the sunny side of a peach, though looking externally like a withered, leafless branch. He sometimes, in speaking of his past trials, calls them his light afflictions."

"Light, indeed!" Charles exclaimed, "what then is heavy?"

"I once asked him that question, and this was his answer: 'Nothing is so heavy, dear Madam, but *sin*. Better, a thousand times, see our dear ones crazed, or sick, or dying, than see them living in possession of every faculty, and yet doing wrong. Yes, all things are light compared with that.'"

"Indeed they are!" Franse returned, so earnestly that Madam Liebnitz looked at him in surprise.

He saw the expression, and colored visibly, but merely said, at the same time rising to go, "I will be ready in season to-morrow. I hope we may have a fine day. Good-night, Madam," and at once withdrew.

CHAPTER XXII.

NO lovelier day ever lifted its bright face above the horizon, than that on which our party were to start on their little journey. The air was very warm but fresh. There was no languor in it. The sky was blue, with that rich tint of which great heat robs it. The trees held their myriad leaves with gentle but vigorous force; not one was hanging listless or drooping. The happy birds flitted gaily about, transacting the momentous affairs of their feathery kingdom, in blithe, merry tones, apparently without any of the jar and wrangle to be heard among men. In the gardens that make Leipsic almost one grand parterre, at least on the great promenade, and in

the new town, the flowers held themselves proudly, swaying with elastic grace in the summer wind that came dancing by, giving each a playful shake, and scattering innumerable dew-drops, that sent out diamond sparkles as they fell.

When Franse came forth into this joyous outside world, from the dim light of Herr Humbert's bed-room, where he went to say good-bye before starting, his spirit responded with something of its old-time readiness.

"How well you look this morning!" exclaimed Madam Liebnitz, as he entered the carriage. "Herr Lenz, this is my young friend, Herr Franse."

Greetings were exchanged, and Margaret then made some particular inquiries about Herr Humbert, which led the conversation in that direction, for a time, and all the while Charles was observing the stranger closely, without seeming to do so.

Herr Lenz was a man of tall, gaunt proportions; his clothes hung upon him loosely, but seemed well made, nevertheless. His face was hollow-cheeked, lantern-jawed, and wrink-

led; his eyes deep-set and sad looking. A forehead wonderfully noble and well formed rose above eyebrows that were bushy, and almost white, while his head, from which he had taken his hat, was thinly covered with white hair.

Such was Herr Lenz at first sight. But they were hardly beyond the suburbs of the city, on the high road to Weissenfels, before Charles became thoroughly interested in the man.

"You come from a noble country, Herr Franse," he said. "I have always felt the deepest interest in both American history and politics. I shall never go there, but the time was, when to see its natural wonders, and study its national character and peculiarities, was one of my strongest desires."

"You would find a marked difference between the old world and the new, sir," Franse replied. "America is yet in the early stage of rapid growth. She gives splendid promise, but like all young things, she has many deficiencies, that time alone can supply. With her the future is everything: here, it is the past."

"Yes," said Madam Liebnitz, "the very ground we are now riding over has several layers of history upon it. Poor Saxony has always been the highway for contending armies."

"It is hard to realize that to-day," Margaret said. "It looks so brimful of peace and happiness."

"Perhaps we might be interested in seeing how much we can remember about the historic events that have occured between Leipsic and Weissenfels," returned Madam Liebnitz, with a sort of challenge in her tone. "Suppose somebody begin, and let the rest add what they can."

"Shall we start with the top or bottom layer?" asked Herr Lenz.

"The bottom, by all means," she replied. "It is not the way to read history backwards."

"Who shall begin this display of knowledge?" he asked.

"Oh, the young folks, of course. It would not be fair to expect them to add anything after we had told all we knew. Come, Margaret."

She laughed, the color deepening in her face, as it always did on the least provocation. "I'm not much of an history scholar," she said, "but I remember coming over this road once with grandpa, and his telling me about the dreadful battle that was fought at Lutzen, three miles this side of Weissenfels, between Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, and Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland. This was during the thirty years war, sometime in November of 1632." Here she paused, and turning to Charles, said, with droll simplicity, "Now you go on."

"I can't," he said, falling in with her humor. "I don't know what comes next."

"Why, you can tell what they were fighting about, and who was beaten," she replied.

"So I can," he exclaimed, joyfully. "Religion was at the bottom of it, as it has been so many times before and since. Protestants and Catholics. Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstien, as their champions, were here arrayed against each other. The Protestants won the day, though their beloved leader was killed. If I remember rightly, Wallenstein was not

once wounded, though in the thickest of the fight."

"I never could be reconciled that the noble king should die before the issue of the battle was decided," said Madam Liebnitz, "or that an inferior officer, like Bernard, should lead the Swedes on to victory."

"Better so, than that Gustavus should have led them to defeat," replied Herr Lenz. "No doubt the loss of their beloved king roused them to fight, as perhaps even his presence could not have done. Wallenstien's army was nearly double that of Gustavus'."

"Yes, but how superior in the spirit that animated them, were both the Swedish monarch and his army, to the Germans. You remember that before going into this battle, they sang 'Luther's hymn,' Gustavus leading in a deep, sonorous bass. Cotemporary authorities represent the effect produced by forty thousand voices thus pealing out in unison, as something awfully impressive. They say its effect was startling on the free companies and dissolute levies of the Imperial army, who were little accustomed to religious services of any kind."

"He was buried at Weissenfels, was he not?" Charles asked.

"Yes, with the exception of his heart," Herr Lenz replied. "That was carried back to Stockholm, at least it is so stated on good authority. Wherever it rests, it was that of a wise, brave, Christian hero, and a loving one, too, if the stories they tell about his affection for his only child, Christina, are true."

"What about her?" asked Margaret.

"She was a bold, sturdy little lass, and grew to be anything but a lovely woman," he returned. "But her father never saw her after she was about four years old. When she was a baby she was taken dangerously sick during his absence on some military expedition. He no sooner heard of it, than he hastened home with all speed, and on her recovery he made a solemn feast to celebrate the event, and express his gratitude. After this, he always took her with him wherever he went, until his invasion of Germany. The story is told that once when he was on a tour, he came to the fortress of Colmar. The walls literally bristled with guns, in readiness to fire the customary

salute of welcome, but when they saw the little Christina, they were afraid the noise would frighten her to death, for she was only two years old. In this dilemma the captain came out to meet the king and explain matters. Gustavus hesitated. At first he inclined to omit the ceremony, but as he looked in the fearless face of his little girl, he said, 'She is a soldier's child; she must learn to bear the noise of cannon. Let them be fired.' They obeyed the command, and when everybody looked to see the little maiden fainting, perhaps dying with terror, she sat on her father's arm clapping her hands and shouting for very delight. Of course the royal parent was gratified beyond measure."

As Herr Lenz finished this little story, they drove into the village of Kaya, one of four through which they had to pass on their way to Wiessenfels.

"Are we to discuss the upper layer of history connected with this place?" asked Herr Lenz. "It will bring us forward with quite a long stride, and give us, instead of Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein, Napoleon and Wittgenstein."

Margaret looked imploringly at her grandmother.

"I see this child is getting tired of the history lesson," the old lady said, laughing. "Perhaps we'd better let her rest awhile."

"That's right, grandma," she replied heartily. "On such a day as this, one wants to forget everything sad and heart-breaking. See, the driver is stopping to water his horses. I'll get out a minute, and speak to these children." Charles made haste to assist her to alight, and having thanked him with a pleasant smile, she walked slowly toward the cabin before which they had stopped.

As she approached, the children fled, except one sturdy urchin, apparently about four years old, and a wee toddler just learning to walk. The boy stood his ground manfully, determined not to be dislodged from his position in the middle of the narrow path. He was poorly clad, and not over clean, but his chubby face, with its bright, intelligent eyes, looked very attractive through the tangle of yellow hair that fell over it.

"How do you do, Jacob," Margaret said,

thus setting a trap to catch the child's name, well knowing she could not get it by direct means.

"My name isn't Jacob," he replied indignantly; "my name's John Frederick William Jerusalem Miller," pronouncing every word with slow distinctness, so they were heard by those in the carriage. They laughed aloud, but Margaret maintained perfect gravity, except for the twinkle in her eye.

"Well, Mr. John Frederick William Jerusalem Miller, can I get some water in the house?" she asked.

He made no answer, but moved to one side so she could pass.

"Thank you," she said, going to the cabin door, where the child's mother met her.

She repeated her question, and when the woman brought a clean mug full of the clear, cool liquid, she paused before drinking it to say,

"Your little son's name aroused my curiosity. Would you mind telling me why you gave him so long a one?"

"Oh dear, no," the woman replied, pleased that the lady cared enough to ask. "His father

was the one that chose it, because he has a book in which he loves to read, and the man's name that wrote it is John Frederick William Jerusalem. He always said he'd call his first boy after him, and so he did."

"May I see the book a minute?" Margaret asked.

Almost instantly she had it in hand, and was just looking at the title page, when a wild scream made her turn suddenly. She never forgot the scene on which her eyes fell. There stood the wee toddler face to face with an immense cosset sheep, their eyes on a level, and scarcely six inches apart, while John Frederick William, &c., was fast hold with both hands of the animal's tail, his feet braced, and pulling for dear life to hold him back from giving the impending bunt.

Thus attacked in the rear, this knight of the woolly fleece tried to face his antagonist, but the spirit of J. F. W. J. Miller was equal to the occasion, and he kept his hold, despite the lively movements of his foe, till his mother and Margaret from the house, and Charles from the carriage, rushed to the rescue.

When his baby sister was safe in the maternal arms, he let go with a sigh of relief, and a somewhat heightened color.

"Bring him here. I want to see him nearer," Madam Liebnitz said.

So while Margaret went back to the house with the frau and her baby, young John was led to the carriage, and placed on the seat beside the stately dame.

"You are a brave boy," she said. "I expect you love that little sister dearly."

There was no response, though the restless eyes seemed to be searching everything.

"I like to see boys love their sisters," she went on, not knowing what other remark of interest to make.

He looked up suddenly into her face with these unexpected words: "You needn't say any more about that."

Herr Lenz looked at him sternly. "My boy, you're saucy," he said.

"He didn't mean to be," she replied, putting her motherly arm about him, "You mistake his feelings. It was dislike of praise, not impertinence."

If John failed to understand the words, he comprehended the look, and especially the protecting arm. He moved nearer to Madam Liebnitz.

But Margaret had come back, and it was time to proceed. Charles tried to lift the child out, but he nestled closer to his new friend, and whispered, his face working with eagerness, "Take me. I want to ride."

"Oh, no. We are going a long way, and your mother couldn't spare you," she replied. "Let the gentleman take you out."

John said no more. There were no tears, no pleading words, but there was such an expression of keen disappointment, such silent grief in his poor little face, that Herr Lenz exclaimed, "I declare, it is too bad!"

"O grandma, can't we take him to Weissenfels, and bring him back to-morrow?" pleaded Margaret.

The coachman stood by the door. "If Madam will allow me, I will take him with me," he said. "I've a little chap at home about like him, and I know how eager he is for a ride. This one don't have many chances, I'll be bound."

"Do, dear grandma. I'll go and tell his mother who we are, and persuade her to let him go."

Without waiting for more words, Margaret caught the boy by the hand, and led him to the house.

"We will bring him back safely to-morrow," she promised, after explaining matters. "The lady in the carriage is Madam Liebnitz, and I am her granddaughter."

"The old doctor's wife?" asked the woman.

"Yes."

"I remember him very well. He came to see my father when I was a child. He was a nice man. Yes, John may go. But won't it be too much trouble?" she added, as sober second thought came to quiet the little confusion into which Margaret had thrown her, by the rather singular proposition.

"No, it is a pleasure," Margaret said, with a reassuring smile.

"Then I'll wash him a bit. I won't be a minute." This done, and his yellow locks smoothed and covered with his Sunday cap, the best article in his wardrobe, he looked

quite fit for the place beside the driver, on which he was soon mounted, and from which, as he rode away, he surveyed the world with a look of grave satisfaction, that spoke volumes. To sit there rolling along in the sunshine behind a pair of noble horses, sometimes even allowed to hold the reins as they went slowly up a hill, was to the child such bliss as sealed his lips with unutterable joy. These moments would live in his memory when the yellow locks were white with age, and Margaret, often leaning out, to catch a glimpse of him, knew what the lover of nature meant, when he spoke of the "Joy of delighting."

As they drew near Lutzen, Herr Lenz spoke from the window. "Driver, when we come to the rock, please stop."

"Yes, sir. We're just there, sir," and almost immediately he drew in his horses.

"With your leave, Fraulien Margaret, I will show Herr Franse this boulder, supposed to mark the spot where Gustavus Adolphus fell," Herr Lenz said. "Shall we get out and examine it?"

"By all means," Charles replied, "if Madam can spare the time."

"I would like to see it myself," she said. "It is some years since I have been this way."

So the whole party left the carriage and found by the road-side a large, rough block of granite, shaded by a few poplars. Upon the top of it was a kind of canopy in cast iron, and about it several rude seats.

"This is called 'The stone of the Swede,'" Herr Lenz explained. "It was here that he received first a ball through his left arm, and shortly after another through his body, after he had outstripped the main part of his army, and while he was fighting sword in hand at the head of the Smaland regiment of Cavalry. For some reason, he had gone into battle without the cuirass he usually wore, and had on only a doublet of grey cloth, with the distinguishing military scarf."

"His horse was wounded also, wasn't he," Margaret asked.

"Yes, and plunged so furiously he threw his rider. Two attendants flung themselves across his prostrate body, to protect it, though both were mortally wounded. A gentleman of the bed-chamber, in the hope of saving

his sovereign, cried out that he was the king. This act of friendship cost him his life, however, for he was instantly stabbed to the heart. Gustavus, almost dead from loss of blood, on being asked who he was, replied with undaunted courage, 'I am king of Sweden, and seal with my blood the Protestant religion and the liberties of Germany.'"

"Did he die on the battle-field?" Margaret asked.

"Oh, yes. The moment he was recognized he received five more wounds, and at last a bullet through the head. Just before the breath left his body, he exclaimed, 'My God! my God! Alas, my poor queen!' Picolomine fought desperately for possession of the body, but it was successfully defended by Colonel Stalhaus, and carried to Weissenfels, where it was given to his sorrowing queen, who had accompanied him to Germany."

During this recital, the party stood gazing silently at the rude monument. They were carried back to the terrible scenes it commemorated with such distinctness as almost to forget the present, until Madam Liebnitz reminded

them that it was high time they were on their way, if they expected to reach the end of their ride in season for dinner. Thus admonished, they re-entered the carriage, and drove rapidly on, not pausing at Lutzen, which is only remarkable for its association with the great battle.

The rest of the way was enlivened by the information drawn out by Herr Lentz, concerning American scenery, manners and customs, during a very spirited conversation between him and Charles.

Franse was an enthusiastic admirer of natural scenery, especially that of his native land. His powers of description were fine, and Margaret, who was really but slightly acquainted with him, listened in astonishment to the thought and fancy thus displayed.

"I doubt if I can give you any idea of autumn in America," he said. "I only wish you could all pass one October among its northern hills. I wish you could glide imperceptibly from the rich green of mid-summer, through the clear, cool air of September, till you stand among the glories which no tongue, nor pen, nor artist's pencil has ever adequately described.

If, as some one says, 'you can imagine a thousand rainbows, a thousand sunsets melted on the landscape until the splendid scene appears the very garden of Aladdin, where the topaz, the sapphire, the amethyst and the ruby vie with each other in their glittering colors, then you may come near the truth. The maple is a flush of scarlet; the oak is swathed in the imperial purple of the Cæsars; the birch flings out its golden banners; the beech has the orange tinge of the sky, just over the spot where the sun sinks, while among them the pine lifts its changeless plume of green, making them more gorgeous by the sombre contrast. Then beneath are a multitude of tints upon the plants and bushes, as if the leafy gems on the branches above had flashed their superb hues beneath them.' Yet, after all, words can give but a faint conception of the magnificence with which October decks herself, especially among the hills of northern New England."

"You are eloquent, young man," Herr Lenz said. "Just see the rapt expression you have brought into Fraulien Margaret's face. I verily believe she sees it all."

"The description is not mine, sir; it is borrowed," Charles said, glancing at Margaret, who laughed merrily, despite the blushes.

"How cruel of you, Herr Lenz, to break the spell," she exclaimed. "I was perfectly enchanted. The whole glowing picture seemed right before my eyes."

"Forgive me, Fraulien. It was bad of me. If I was a young man, I would make amends by inviting you to go with me and see if the reality justified such word-painting."

"Then you would say the half had not been told you," Charles said, just as the carriage stopped at the Weissenfel inn.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER dinner, the party went out, first to transact the business Madam Liebnitz had in hand, afterward to visit various points of interest. Young John, still in a seventh heaven of delight, was left in charge of the friendly driver, and all went well, until at evening thick clouds began to gather, and, much to the chagrin of our party, the patter of fast falling rain disturbed their slumbers during the whole night.

With morning the storm increased, and the wind sighed dismally. The face of nature was a sorry sight; the brightness had all gone out of it.

"Never mind," said Madam Liebnitz, we

have a close carriage, and plenty of wraps; we shall do well enough. The driver will have the worst of it."

"We must take Master John Frederick William Jerusalem Miller with us inside," suggested Margaret.

"Well, I hardly know about that," her grandmother replied, laughing. "Perhaps there's room for Master *John*, but I object to the rest."

To wait for the storm to clear was not to be thought of, as all were anxious to return at once, so they set out as soon as possible after breakfast. But the way that yesterday had smiled in the bright sunshine, was now sullen under the clouds! Mud was everywhere. Gullies and ruts made an uncomfortable and not always safe variety. So their progress was slow and far from exhilerating.

But it is in such scenes as this that the true character appears. Peevishness, selfishness, and irritability flourish and grow green, in a close carriage, under a heavy rain-storm, over torn and muddy roads. In this case, however, these culprit plants were either not present, or else

they were so buried beneath courtesy, care for others, and genuine good-temper, that even these favorable conditions could not bring them to the surface. Even Master John was pronounced a model of juvenile patience, and Margaret was just rewarding him with a tempting cake from her basket, when, crash! bump! "whoa!" came all in a second, and our party found themselves in a very astonished heap, in the back corner of the vehicle. Strange to relate, neither lady screamed. Charles, who had fallen uppermost, was making frantic efforts to open the carriage door, in which he finally succeeded, and with difficulty drew himself out. The driver was busy with his frightened horses, having himself been thrown to the ground, but without losing his reins, or being hurt. Charles saw at a glance that one hind wheel lay prostrate in the mud, but just why was not quite plain. He succeeded, after some trouble, in getting Herr Lenz upon his feet, and with his help the ladies and John were soon released. Nobody was hurt, thank fortune, but what was to be done? They were more than two miles

from Kaya, in the pouring rain and deep mud, with only the alternative of waiting where they were, until their driver could ride to the village and return in some conveyance for them, if perchance he were lucky enough to find one, or walking as they best could to Kaya.

After a little consultation, they chose the last. Hans, the driver, proposed that the ladies should each take a horse, and ride on, but as the animals were already well terrified, had never had a woman on their backs, and there were no saddles, it was decided to trust to the slow but safe progress of walking. So Hans, with the assistance of the gentlemen, drew the disabled carriage to the road side, and mounting one horse, he took the other by the bridle, and set out.

He would gladly have taken Master John before him on the horse, but Franse, fearing further accident, insisted on carrying him on his back. As nobody was anxious for a prolonged discussion, they at once started for their goal. Margaret wrapped the boy in an ample waterproof cape, and drew the hood over his head, in which he looked like a

golden-haired cherub, in a monk's cowl, peeping over Franse's shoulder, as he strode along with him on his back, at the same time helping Madam Liebnitz along, leaving Margaret and the old Herr to get on as best they could. Herr Lenz now appeared in the splendor of a man who, master of circumstances, can shine even when they are adverse. Notwithstanding the mud, the rain, the gullies, and the fatigue, which became severe toward the end of their compulsory journey, his stock of anecdote and fun seemed inexhaustible. Apparently a merrier party never walked together over sun-lit, flower-decked greensward, than this, now making its way to Kaya. Nevertheless, they were by no means sorry to arrive there. They went directly to the cabin where J. F. W. J. Miller belonged, and he was lifted from Franse's tired back, dry, warm, and sound asleep. His mother kissed him fondly as she laid him away, and with hearty hospitality devoted herself to her water-soaked, mud-bespattered guests. A fire was already kindled in expectation of their coming, for Hans had brought her the news of their mis-

hap, and as their heavy wraps had prevented the rain from penetrating below the surface, they were soon dry.

Madam Liebnitz had borne her unusual exertions bravely, and without apparent injury, so their present anxieties centered on dinner, and the means of pursuing their journey.

The first was soon made ready by their willing hostess, whose heart had been completely won by their attention to her boy. It was a simple meal, but eaten with the sauce of keen appetites, prepared by their unusual exercise, it seemed fit for a king. When it was over, Franse went out to find what Hans had been about in the meantime. He met him on his way to tell them that no conveyance could be found in the place, and it was useless to expect their own to be mended in season to reach Leipsic that night.

"What is to be done?" Charles asked, in a tone of dismay, when the state of things was made known to the ladies.

"Why, we must stay where we are till to-morrow," Madam Liebnitz said, quietly. When Charles looked to see her thrown into

a worry over this uncomfortable delay, to his surprise she accepted it in a spirit of the most cheerful contentment.

"You are very philosophical," he said.

"No, it is not that at all," she said. "It is my wish to stay."

"I hardly know how to understand you," he replied.

"Did you never read, 'A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps?' Or this, 'The Lord doeth all things well?' I believe God is my Father, that he does direct my steps, and that he does *all* things well for me. Shall I fret, then, when I am delayed in a journey, or my will is crossed in any direction?" She said this, looking at the young man very kindly, but earnestly. He made no answer. Here was a practical working of implicit confidence in the constant direction of a Supreme Power that he could not gainsay, and which certainly added very much to his comfort. Had the ladies been listless and complaining, it would certainly have made matters much worse. With them so contented and agreea-

ble, the delay was perfectly endurable. Margaret, with the ready tact she had learned in her ministry among the poor, assisted the peasant woman in making the most convenient arrangements for her guests. She saw at a glance what was best for all parties, and so forestalled many of the perplexities into which the good frau would otherwise have fallen.

Herr Lenz and Charles had found a shelter for the night elsewhere. The carriage had been brought in, and was being repaired, the rain was over, and all things looked promising for a comfortable return home in the morning.

As they sat together, after supper, round the cheerful fire, in a spirit of ready acquiescence to the inevitable, Herr Lenz said, "I have been reminded, to-day, of a little episode that occurred to me in my youth. The day's experience has been nothing to it."

"Suppose you tell us about it, and let us judge of that," suggested Margaret.

"Very well. I was in the heyday of life, like our young friend Franse here, and nothing suited me like adventure. I was passing the winter at K——, a town distant perhaps

thirty-five miles from Gottengen. Toward Spring we heard that a famous singer was to delight the music-lovers of that old place with her witching voice. Of course, the music-lovers of K—— must be delighted also, and as Mahomet wouldn't come to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mahomet. Though no musician, I loved good singing, and beside, I was ready for action and novelty, so I joined a party made up of several ladies and gentlemen, with whom I set out next day. Three of us went in a diligence, as pioneers, and the rest, packed in a large carriage, followed behind. The road was a wild one, leading over high hills, bleak plains, through forests, and across ice-bound rivers. Snow was everywhere, above, beneath, around. The roads were blocked with it. Twice we stuck fast in it, before we had gone five miles. We got out only through the exertion of workmen engaged in clearing the way. There were places where it lay six and seven feet deep, and the wind stung as if it were made of needle-points. But we kept up our courage, even amid the death-like stillness of the country, which impressed us

very sensibly with the total absence of life or motion. No birds on the wing, no beasts in the field, no leaves on the trees, the very branches stiffened, and the murmuring streams hushed. The nipping wind had the good effect of stimulating the lazy ostlers into something like quickness in tying and untying our post horses."

"Excuse me for interrupting you, my dear sir," Charles exclaimed, "but I have the greatest curiosity to know why ropes are always used to fasten horses to a diligence, and why they are so long that half the animal's strength is wasted? Now in America we use leather straps, and the horses are harnessed as close to the carriage as possible, without danger of its hitting them. Every time I see a diligence, in itself so cumbersome, with the horses so far ahead, and mounted by a postilion who seems always chosen for his great size and weight, I can't help thinking the whole arrangement is contrived on purpose to give the poor horses the most trouble and labor possible."

"Well, really, I never thought about it before," Herr Lenz replied, "And I presume

the reason of it is that nobody else has. Our fathers did so, and therefore we do the same, without troubling our heads to think whether there is any better way. I suspect here is one of the differences between us and you Americans. I've heard it said the young folks over there have not overmuch reverence for the customs and opinions of their forefathers."

"I'm afraid that is true, but pray go on with your story."

"Well, at last we reached Gottengen, and drove to an inn, followed by a party of wild looking students, who evidently mistook the lady of our party for the singer. Everybody was in eager anticipation of her arrival. At last a great shout announced it, and the crowd, more curious than civil, pressed about her carriage till she was finally rescued and carried away by a friend. That night a sudden thaw set in, and next morning the streets were a mass of dirty slush. We did not venture out, but waited for the evening with what patience we could. I cannot stop to describe the concert, except to say of it that we all

felt paid for coming, and determined to stay long enough to hear the Cantatrice again. But alas! Next day we learned that the thaw had been so great that half the country was under water, and that if we did not start at once we could not reach home for many days, so we hastily packed our portmanteaux and set out. We found everything afloat. The pure white snow was turned into a dirty yellow liquid. Rapid streams rushed along the roads, wound round the tombstones in the burial places, and carried away fresh sods from new made graves. Boats traversed the fields; bushes and broken timber sailed down the river, and even garden walls were tottering and sinking before the released waters. But we made our way slowly in the lumbering green coach, our jovial-faced, scarlet-coated courier ever cheering us with the promise of greater danger ahead. At last we came to a long bridge, the approach to which was through nearly three feet of water. Here the sight was truly extraordinary; the summits of the hills around still kept on their snow caps, and the dark Tannen branches bent under their wintry

weight; but the meadows and sloping fields on the hill-sides were fresh and green like the first bursting of Spring. The swollen river bore along uprooted trees, debris of all sorts, and huge blocks of ice tumbling over one another in wild confusion. Half the population were abroad to gaze at the scene. Some of the masses of ice were at least twenty feet long, and many broad, and woe to whatever came in their headlong way. Having got safely past this point, we began to indulge in visions of home, but when we came within about half a mile of our destination, we met a crowd of long-faced, anxious looking people. A few hundred yards further on we came to a dead halt. On alighting, I found a confused mass of wagons, diligences, carriages, milk and coal carts, and an indescribable Babel of human tongues. The river had suddenly risen within the last half hour, and the road between us and the bridge was deeply flooded and crowded with ice. Some men tried to cross in a boat, but it was useless, the blocks of ice, many tons in weight, came with such force that the adventurers barely escaped being swamped.

The question was now not of proceeding, but of effecting a speedy retreat, for every moment the water was rising. Half the village was already submerged, at least two feet deep, and the panic-stricken peasants were driving their cows, pigs and poultry further up the country. What was to be done? Should we go back to some miserable inn and wait for the waters to subside, or make our way to a railway station distant about three hours drive, and from there make a detour of about forty miles to reach the town, which was now not five thousand rods away? After a hasty weighing of the pros and cons, we decided on the latter course, and were speedily splashing away toward the cars. At last we reached home safely, and proud in the consciousness that we had accomplished our attendance on the singer despite snow and water."

"You proved the truth of that Shakspearian line, 'There is a *tide* in the affairs of men,'" said Charles, laughing.

"Yes, truly, but we had to alter the next line slightly to make it fit. With us it would have been 'Which taken at the tide leads on to (*mis*)-fortune.'"

"Well, I'm glad you came safely through and lived to tell us about it," Margaret said. "You have made the evening pass delightfully, and I thank you heartily."

"You are kind to enjoy an old man's story so much," he replied. "But now we'll say good-night, so as to get up betimes to-morrow."

And with this the gentlemen went away to their uncomfortable bed at the poor little inn, while the ladies lay down in their clean nest and slept the sleep of weariness and contentment.

The next morning found them early on their way, and they reached home without further incident worth recording. Charles found Herr Humbert unfeignedly glad to see him back, and to listen to his account of even the minutiæ of their little journey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"MAY I see it, Miss Liebnitz ?" Charles asked, coming unexpectedly upon her one morning a few days after their return from Weissenfels, as she was showing Herr Humbert a sketch over which he was laughing heartily.

"Certainly," she said, holding it up for him to see. "Can you tell what it is?"

"I declare!" he exclaimed, joining in the laugh, "that is admirable. Nobody could mistake it, I'm sure. Master John and the cosset sheep are every bit as comical here as they were at Kaya. You have done them full justice. But I didn't know you were an artist."

"I'm not," she replied, modestly. "I have only a moderate degree of talent for drawing, but if any scene impresses me very forcibly I

can't rest till I make a picture of it. Beside, I thought this would amuse Herr Humbert, and help him appreciate the ludicrousness of our adventure."

"If I could draw like that I should call myself an artist," Charles replied.

"Well, well, no matter what she calls herself, we know what she *is*," interposed Herr Humbert. "Get that bronze, will you? She's going to begin explaining it to me this morning."

"With pleasure, sir," returned the young man, "but first I want Miss Liebnitz to promise me that I may stay and listen."

"Of course, boy, of course. He may, mayn't he, Margaret?"

"Certainly, if he wishes to, and will be good," she said, her frankness tinged with a shade of reserve, behind which, as under a delicate veil, she seemed always sheltering herself, even in her most vivacious moods. Notwithstanding her practical common sense, her usefulness, her energy, her unshrinking performance of even the most irksome duty, she was always surrounded by an atmosphere of womanly deli-

cacy as subtle yet as alluring as the fragrance of a rose. Charles was always watching to find it gone, at least for the time, but his scrutiny only made him the more certain that it was never wanting.

He brought the statue and placed it on the table before Herr Humbert, but as he did so he trembled to think of the conflict about to begin between implicit faith and total unbelief. Could the end be other than fatal to Margaret's peace?

She had gone to the library on an errand for the invalid, and, yielding to a sudden impulse, Charles followed her.

"Miss Liebnitz, are you not afraid to expose your precious beliefs to the severe test of Herr Humbert's reasoning?" he asked, anxiously.

"I have thought of that," she replied, gravely, "but there is no danger. I am merely an instrument in the hands of another. I have only to do my duty, and leave the result with God."

Franse said no more; but went back to the room he had just left, where Margaret almost instantly joined him.

"Charles, this fellow looks as if he saw something worth having!" exclaimed Herr Humbert. "One would think he was climbing a mountain after specimens!"

"That's just it, dear Herr," Margaret replied eagerly. "He does see something worth having; he is climbing a mountain, and finding specimens all the way of a great treasure hidden away for him on the top."

"Mountain-tops sometimes disappoint us, girl," the invalid said, sharply. "We never are certain what we shall find till we get there."

"True," she answered, gently, "but of this one it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him!'"

"Well, well! let's see the figure inside," he answered, evidently uneasy at the present turn the conversation had taken.

It was but the work of a few moments for Charles to uncover Lombardo's exquisite representation of "the inner man of the heart," and place it pure and white before him.

The sick man examined it silently, for a time.

Then he said, suddenly, "Now find that place in the Bible where the man got his idea."

Charles obeyed, and offered the book to Margaret.

"No, read it yourself," the Herr interposed. "She'll have enough to do to explain it."

There was no escape, and so the young man began: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

* * * * * * * *

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."

Here he closed the book and laid it on the table.

"Now, Margaret, how can a man be strong in the Lord?" Herr Humbert asked.

"By simply trusting him," she answered, eagerly. "If a bird flew to you for refuge, you would protect it for that reason if for no other. Can we think God less generous toward those he is continually calling to confide in him? Believe me, we are very strong the moment we fly to him, because then his almighty power is engaged for our defense, precisely as we need it. If the Bible declares anything distinctly, it is that the strength of God is ours if we will take it."

"Well, then, what's the need of all this outfit? If, as you say, a bird came to me for refuge, I shouldn't fix him up in armor and set him to defending himself."

"Ah, but begging your pardon, I think you would do something very like it. You would give him the defense of a cage, in which you would provide seed and water, and having hung it out of the reach of cats, in a pleasant, sunny window, you would leave him to take care of

himself just as far as he was able, while you still were ready at any moment to exert your superior wisdom and strength on his behalf, in case of need."

"And no doubt he would reward me by fretting and pining continually to get away."

"No doubt," Margaret answered, sadly. "That is generally the return we make to God for his care. When we get into trouble we fly to him for help, and pretend to confide in his supreme power and wisdom. Then we fret and flutter, and beat our wings against the bars, to escape from the very defenses he gives us. Oh, the patience of our Father!" she exclaimed, fervently, suddenly clasping her hands, and as suddenly letting them fall on her lap, while a blush overspread her face at thought of her own enthusiasm.

"Well, child, he is patient, if things are as you think. But we have this point. I get the idea. Presently I shall ponder it carefully. Now let us hear what are some of the wiles of the devil. No doubt you think you know all about 'em, from experience, but it's my belief that he never has had much to do with you."

"That is because you don't know me as I know myself, and, above all, as God knows me," she replied, gravely. "We must appear very different to ourselves and to each other from what we do to him. We can have very little idea how sin looks to an infinitely holy being!"

The words were simple and simply spoken, yet, combined with the profound humility and reverence of her manner, they went home to the hearts of her listeners with great power.

Herr Humbert had long secretly felt the contagion of her implicit belief in and reliance on the existence and protection of an unseen but ever-present God. Every day the longing grew more intense to be certain she was right. What unutterable joy to find the black, horrible blank beyond this present, from which he shrank with ever-increasing dread, changed into the brightness and glory to which Margaret was ever looking forward. It seemed, in his helplessness, that he would give all other knowledge could he but *know* this. No price seemed too great to give in exchange for a peace like Margaret's. Thoughts like these were in his mind, even as her words sounded in his ears.

"The devil," she went on to say, "is a great flatterer. He is very fond of persuading us that we are so good we neither need to be forgiven or improved. When he fails in this, he is very apt to turn square round and, if possible, convince us we are so bad we are beyond all pardon. Then, again, he contrives to keep us busy about a thousand other things in order that we may forget all about it. These are some of his simplest wiles, but, as the word implies, he is artful and cunning beyond our power to conceive. He knows every one of us like a book. There isn't a weak place in any of us but he knows just the way through it into our heart of hearts. And just because this is so, we need to fly to God that we may be strong. This is why we need the armor, which, as you see, is all for defense, except the sword, that being the only piece that can be used offensively."

"Let me see the figure closer, Charles," the invalid said. "I declare, it is beautiful! This girdle represents truth, dont it? Now the use of such a thing to a soldier is to bind his armor close about him, and hold his sword."

"And cover the unavoidable gaps where the upper and lower part of his harness meet above his waist," Charles added.

"But, above all, to *strengthen* him," Margaret added. 'Gird up the loins of your mind,' is the apostolic injunction. To do this we must bind them about with sincerity, *truth* in every emotion, word and act. We can't be strong in the Lord unless our belief in him is true. Only when we confide in him with perfect sincerity are we strong and courageous. Beside, I don't see how we can be perfectly sincere with ourselves or others until we are so with him."

"But, child, there is a great deal of truth among men who care nothing for God."

"I know it, dear Herr, but, after all, may not the virtue this girdle represents be more perfect and exalted than that which passes for truth among men? Isn't it just because the Christian does think and care for God that his sincerity is worth more than the other? Neither time nor circumstances can change the principle from which his truthfulness springs. His soul is always seeking to please a God who changes not, and who abhors hypocrisy and deceit."

"But what about those gaps the soldier's belt was intended to hide?" inquired Herr Humbert. "I suppose they're not allowed in this sort of armor."

Margaret laughed, yet sighed, as she answered, "I'm afraid there are a good many imperfections that need to be concealed even here, but we are taught that God accepts a very lame service, provided the heart that offers it has on the girdle."

"How's that, child," the student exclaimed, hastily. "I thought nothing short of absolute perfection would answer."

"Nor will it, in the end," she returned, gently. "That is the final goal, but it is reached by degrees. Suppose I give a little child a bit of sewing to do for me. She loves me with her whole heart, and bends every energy to the task in order to please me. Now, no matter how badly the seam may be sewed on account of the child's inability; I am entirely satisfied because of the sincerity of her love for me, as shown in the fact that she has done her very best. I know that if she keeps on trying she will one day make a perfect

seam, and, meantime, the perfect truthfulness of her love for and desire to please me hide all the imperfections. In like manner the girdle of truth hides all the gaps in the Christian's armor from God."

"How about the seam, if one didn't begin to sew till one was tumbling into the grave?" he asked, bitterly.

"It would make no difference. There would still be an eternity to learn to sew in," she replied, the tears springing unbidden to her earnest eyes.

Herr Humbert slowly turned away his head, and looked out of the window. He seemed lost in thought, but presently roused himself to say, "What next?"

"The breastplate of righteousness," Charles answered. "Just examine it closely, and see how exquisitely it is wrought."

"I declare! that Italian was a patient workman," the Herr exclaimed. "What skill and ingenuity he showed in weaving those tiny letters among this other delicate carving, and still they are plain when one knows how they go."

Margaret and Charles exchanged a glance and smile of pleasure. After all, Herr Humbert was beginning to appreciate this art-work almost as much as they did.

"Well, those old warriors depended very much on their breastplates for defense," he continued. "They protect the most vital parts of the body, so I conclude righteousness stood high in Lombardo's estimation."

"No doubt," Margaret replied, "It does in that of everybody who rightly understands what is meant by it."

"Don't I understand?" he asked, testily.

"I can't say till you give me your idea of it," she replied, smiling.

"Well, I take it to be acting up to the light one has, that is, doing the best one can. Isn't that it, Charles?"

"That is hardly my idea, sir. I understand righteousness to consist in perfect and perpetual obedience to the law of God."

"Do you mean the law as laid down in that chapter of Exodus you read to me the other day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, young man, I have thought profoundly on that law, and if nobody has on a breastplate of righteousness but those who have never broken those commandments, there never was and never will be a man who wears one." Involuntarily he tried to raised a helpless hand that he might give emphasis to his words with one of those resounding raps so often heard on his study table in the old days, but he hardly succeeded in raising it from his lap, and, thus reminded of his infirmity, he sank back feebly in his chair.

"You are both wrong," Margaret said, brightly. "Now listen to Lombardo. He intended this breastplate to represent 'an inward disposition of the heart sweetly, powerfully, constantly inclining the soul to holiness.' As soon as this bit of armor is on one is all alert in the service of God. One becomes fearless and valorous, just as a timid man will fight bravely when his body is well protected by his breastplate."

"Well, child, this talk of fighting is all very splendid, but what's the need of all this outfit and bluster? Where's the enemy?"

For answer Margaret pointed to the twelfth verse of that part of the Bible represented by the statue, and asked Charles to repeat it.

He did so, and, as soon as he had finished, Herr Humbert demanded, angrily, "Well, what does it all mean?"

"To me it means this," she replied, calmly. "Our foes are not merely the evil inclinations within us, and the temptations in the world outside, but they are satan and his armies who are leagued against God and every living soul who would serve him."

"A pretty big army for a chit like you to fight, even with all your armor on," he said, with that cynical scoff in his tone Charles knew so well. "Better run away and hide, hadn't you?"

For an instant Margaret's eye flashed, then filled with tears, and her lip trembled.

"That isn't fair, Herr Humbert," Charles cried, indignantly. "She is certainly standing bravely by her colors, and if for our sakes she is willing to undertake a dangerous duty, we should be the last to bid her run."

The invalid sat silent a little while, and

then said, gently, "I see what you mean, boy, but you're mistaken. I wouldn't say one word to shake her faith. I only wish she could convince me it is so. I'd be ready to face the principalities and powers, and all that, if I could find Margaret's God." Then turning to her, he said, "Never mind a helpless old man, child. Tell me about this white warrior's shoes, and then put him away. I'm tired; beside, I want to think it all over."

Margaret raised his hand to her lips, and then said, smiling, "The white warrior's shoes are strong and beautiful, you see. They are an excellent defense for his feet. Shod with them, he can go over the stoniest places, or through the cold and wet without injury. Just so the soul, shod with the gospel of peace — peace with God, with himself, with his life, though it be full of hindrances, deprivations, afflictions — goes on its way, treading as lightly as the Irish do, who will trip over bogs and quagmires where anybody else would sink and stick fast. The foot carries the whole body, so the will carries the whole soul. So it is, as it were, the soul's foot.

If it rests in this soft shoe of peace, it goes easily and with alacrity, carrying the soul on its way rejoicing."

"That's all very well when you've got the shoe, but that's the first thing to be done."

Margaret laid her hand lovingly on that of the feeble old man, and repeated, slowly, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness assurance *forever!*"

"Forever! Assurance forever!" he murmured. Then, with the abrupt change so common to him, he added, "Now run home, little girl, and tell your grandmother you're an angel, if ever there was one. I'll take the rest of this stone to-morrow. Can you come?"

"Unless something unusual occurs to prevent me," she said, and bidding them good morning, she went away.

Herr Humbert was soon asleep, overcome with fatigue, but Charles had no need of companionship. His dread of this beautiful art-work had vanished, where, he did not ask. In his own room, with the delicate bit of

sculpture before him, he recalled every word Margaret had spoken, often turning to his open Bible for confirmation of her words. The teachings of his childhood came rushing back upon him. He heard his father's voice, he saw his serene, noble face, with its beautiful but sightless eyes, its halo of silvery hair. His mother, too, and his saintly Aunt Gretchen, Mabel, his half-sister, his twin sister, all were present to his thought. All had this armor on. Could he doubt its reality, its necessity, its efficacy? Could he be satisfied without it? Could he get it? From such meditations he was roused by Frau Herman.

"Does the Herr want a letter?" she asked, and laying one beside him, she disappeared, to see after her dinner.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARLES opened the letter in some alarm. It bore the Eau Claire post-mark, but the handwriting was strange to him. He glanced at the signature, and saw the name of Alfred Allison, with which Gretchen's letters had made him familiar.

Wondering what the doctor could want with him, he began to read, and before turning the first page he became wholly absorbed in the contents.

The look of curiosity changed to one of anger, his face grew very stern, but gradually its expression softened, and when he came to the end, he exclaimed, vehemently, "Thank God! one man knows the truth!" Then he

went over the letter again, slowly, and with great care, then folded it, and put it in an inner pocket, just as the dinner-bell rang. "What a letter!" he ejaculated, on his way to his solitary meal. "He must be a magnificent fellow. I hope Gretchen is right about him and Mabel."

The rest of the day was devoted to Herr Humbert, but when all was quiet for the night, Franse sat long over his answer to Dr. Allison's communication. Then he went to rest with a sense of companionship and sympathy, to which he had long been a stranger.

The next morning Herr Humbert was early on the watch for Margaret, with Lombardo's work before him, the Bible open at the place, and everything ready to proceed with the explanation.

"I've been on the lookout for you these two hours," he exclaimed, querulously, when the fair girl made her appearance.

"I'm very sorry, but I didn't think you would begin to expect me so soon," she said, smiling brightly. "Beside, I had some of

my sick bodies to look after before I could come. Here is another bottle of grandma's cordial. She is delighted that you like it. She says if you only knew how she misses your society, you would let her come and see you."

"She'd better miss it than find it isn't worth having," he replied, fretfully. "Where's Charles?"

"Here, sir," Franse answered, coming in from the library, and bidding Margaret a cheerful good morning.

She saw instantly that the shadow always resting on his face was lightened. She had often wondered why it was there. Now she wondered why it had so nearly disappeared, but as she had no clue to either puzzle, she was obliged to content herself with being glad that he looked less sad.

She laid aside her wraps, and sat down by the invalid, taking one helpless hand in her's, and chafing it gently; but he was irritable, and her kindness vexed him.

"Come, come, girl, go to work. I'm tired waiting."

Charles expected some sign of annoyance in her look or manner, as she turned at once to the marble; but no shade was visible in either, as she said, pleasantly,—

"I'm afraid I can hardly do justice to the shield. The command is, '*Above all*, take the shield of faith.'"

"You know, Miss Liebnitz, that in ancient warfare the shield was considered the most important piece of armor, because it could be used so as to protect every part of the person," Charles hastened to say, anxious to assist her to make a beginning, well knowing how easily her own enthusiasm would bear her on when she was once aroused.

"Yes; and it protected the rest of the harness," she replied.

"It was a terrible disgrace to lose one's shield," Herr Humbert said. "You remember the Spartan mothers' injunction to their sons, when they armed them for battle, was, '*With it or on it.*'"

"That is it, dear Herr," Margaret exclaimed, the martial spirit of a soldier coloring her cheek and sparkling in her eye. "'*With it or on it*'

is the true watchword of the soul who wears this armor. With it he must ward off the wicked, and on it the angels shall bear him home to his father's house when the battle is over."

"But what is the spiritual shield?" asked Charles. "It isn't simply belief, for we read that even the devils believe."

Margaret hesitated. Her face, but now so radiant, became perplexed, and she seemed at a loss how to proceed. "How shall I explain it," she said, at last. "It is so difficult to make it understood, unless it is felt. We can never know what it is till we have it. As you say, it is not simply an assent to the truth, any more than eating is a simple assent to the fact that food is nourishing. Faith is the very life of the Christian soul. As the body is nourished and made strong by assimilating suitable food, so is the soul sustained by faith. The Bible says the just shall live by it, shall walk by it, shall be sanctified and comforted by it, and finally shall be saved by it. You remember you said yesterday, that your idea of righteousness was a perfect and perpetual obedience to God's law as given to

Moses. Herr Humbert declared that nobody ever has been or ever will be perfect according to that standard. Now, if this is so, and there is really a penalty attached to sin, are we not shut up to perfect helplessness and despair, until we find God's promise of pardon through a Saviour?" She paused a moment, but neither spoke, though both were listening eagerly. "William Gurnall says," she went on, "that '*justifying* faith is that act of the soul whereby it rests on Christ crucified for pardon and life, and that simply on the warrant, because of God's promise, which promise is the marriage ring on the hand of faith that unites the soul to Christ.' It seems to me that faith is to the soul what breath is to the body: without it nothing can live, neither truth, righteousness, peace, nor any of those Christian virtues represented by this armor."

"But these breaths differ, Miss Liebnitz," said Charles, "inasmuch as one is involuntary and the other is not."

"I think the analogy will hold good, even there," she replied. "Both breaths are God-given, and both are in a sense involuntary. The

new-born soul begins to breathe faith as inevitably as the new-born child begins to breathe air. We can stifle both, and so cause feebleness and death. Yet, if allowed and encouraged to breath freely, both will grow strong, and the soul will prove St. Paul a teller of the truth when he said what I have already referred to, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

"If, as you say, faith is God-given, like our natural breath, how are we to blame if we don't have it?" Herr Humbert demanded, sharply. "According to this we have no power in the matter."

"You are right and you are wrong, dear Herr," Margaret said. "We have and again we haven't. Spiritual life is unquestionably God's gift, but it is always bestowed on the honest seeker. 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' The act of coming is ours to perform, the gift is God's, but surely we can't imagine him so unreasonable as to withhold from us faith, without which he expressly declares it is impossible to please him. Oh, the great Apostle spoke advisedly, when he likened faith to a shield! If we have

this defense we shall be more than conquerors. With him we shall be persuaded that 'neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!'"

As she repeated the glowing words her face grew rapturous with emotion, her eyes darkened and lifted themselves to the sky just seen through the open window, and then came slowly back to rest brimful of tears upon her old friend, while again the ever ready color crept up to her white brow.

Herr Humbert, who always shrank from the manifestation of strong feeling, turned toward the statue, saying, "Only two more pieces, the helmet and the sword; what of them?"

"'And for a helmet the hope of salvation,'" she said, resuming her quiet manner. "We all know the power of hope in every day life; what a spur it is to action, what a defense against discouragement. It is ever urging us on toward some future good. 'So

when the soul by faith closes with the promise as a true and faithful word, then it is lifted up by hope to wait for the performance of it.' Mr. Gurnall, from whom I have just quoted, says farther, 'The promise is, as it were, God's love-letter to his church and spouse, in which he opens his very heart, and tells all he means to do for her. Faith reads and embraces it with joy, whereupon the believing soul, by hope, looks out of this window with a longing expectation to see his chariot come in the accomplishment of it.' This hope of salvation, which of course includes all the particular blessings God has in store for us, is to the soul what the helmet is to the soldier; and just as men will endure hardship and toil in the hope of wealth, fame, and a thousand other temporary advantages, so the christian, with this piece of armor securely fixed, is a Samson for strength, a Job for patience, while pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Gurnall says that 'hope goes into the field and waits on the Christian till the last battle is fought and the field cleared,

and then faith and hope together carry him in the chariot of the promise to the Saviour's door, where they deliver him up into the hands of love and joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the blissful presence of God.'"

"How much of what you say Antonio and Lombardo have contrived to express in the faces of this inner and outer man," said Charles, breaking the silence that fell upon them for a little time when Margaret paused. "They must both have made it a profound study."

"Not so much that as an *experience*," she replied. "You may be certain they made these figures, as it were, out of their own hearts."

"And you are interpreting them to us out of yours," Herr Humbert said, with unusual gentleness. "Now let's hear about the sword, and then this young man and I will have enough to quarrel over for some time to come."

"I think your quarrel will not be with each other but with a common enemy, when you have carefully examined the sword of the

Spirit, which is the word of God," Margaret said, soberly. "Unlike the rest, this last piece of armor has a double office; it is not only for defense, but with it the war can be carried into the enemy's country. The great armorer who forged this weapon is the Holy Spirit of God. 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Still, the sword is of no use either for attack or defense until some arm wields it. The soldier must be in constant practice with his sword-arm if he would be victorious."

"But he must be taught, Miss Liebnitz."

"True, and in this case the teacher is the maker. The Spirit of God is the only true interpreter of the word. He alone can give it its full power and efficacy in the soul. I believe it is the experience of all faithful students of the Bible, that it contains a wealth of meaning, a hidden power they would never find for themselves. It is not

seen till read in the divine light of God's Spirit. And why is this to be wondered at? Don't we see something very like it in our every day affairs? Set a child to reading the work of some mature and cultivated mind, and he will often fail to find more than the surface meaning until some one older and wiser makes it plain to him. Is it strange, then, that the thoughts of an infinite God need a divine interpreter?"

"But do we always have it, Miss Liebnitz?"

"Yes, always, when we want it enough to ask for it sincerely."

"How do you know that, Margaret?" Herr Humbert demanded, fixing his keen eyes upon her.

"Because," she said, meeting the look with gentle confidence, "He has said, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, *and it shall be given him.*'"

"But why ask, if you believe God knows all our wants beforehand," he returned.

"To me His commands seem a sufficient

reason," she said, modestly. "But there are many reasons that, with your powers of thought, cannot fail to occur to you as you look more profoundly into the subject, and study the Bible. I will only speak of one, the influence of prayer on ourselves. Imagine Herr Franse to be an ignorant lad, and your son. You have it in your power to give him every advantage of education, society, and wealth. You tell him so, you try to make him understand the value of these things, but he cares nothing for them, and goes his own way. You don't force them on him, but only tell him they are his whenever he asks for them. Presently he begins to see them in their true light, yet he will not tell you so, neither will he ask you to give him what he needs. He says, 'My father knows all about it. If he has a mind to give it to me, very well. I shan't ask him.' Now, wouldn't you very probably wait till the desire grew strong enough to overcome the pride? As the human mind is constituted, wouldn't you thus increase the longing? We all know that what comes to us with no effort on our part

is but little prized, and this is one among many reasons why we are bidden to pray, why we often have to repeat our prayers many times. While waiting, we see our desires in a variety of attractiveness that would never unfold itself, did we at once clasp them to our hearts. Thus our appreciation of their worth keeps pace with the delay. I want to give you a few more of Gurnall's words, and then I'll have done. He says, 'One reason why prayer is so necessary a means with our other armor for defense, is taken from the co-ordination of this duty with all other means for the Christian's defense, and that by divine appointment. He that bids us take the girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, &c., commands us also not to neglect this duty. Now, what God has joined we must not sever. The efficacy of co-ordinate means lies in their conjunction. The force of an army lies not in this troop, or in that one regiment, but in all the parts in a body. And if any single troop or company shall presume to fight the enemy alone, what can they expect but to be routed by the enemy, and

punished by their general also? Let not any say they use this means and that; if any one be willingly neglected, the golden chain of obedience is broken. And as to a good action, there is required a concurrence of all the several ingredients and causes; so to make a good Christian, there is required a conscientious care to use all appointed means: he must follow the Lord fully, not make here a balk and there a furrow. It is not the least of satan's policy to get between one duty and another, that a man may not unite his forces and be uniform in his endeavor. There are few so bad as to use no means, and not many so faithful to God and themselves as conscientiously to use all. One pretends to sincerity, and dares appeal to God that he means well, and his heart is good; but for the breastplate of righteousness, it is too heavy and cumbersome for him to wear. Another seems very just and righteous, so that he would not wrong his neighbor, no, not of one penny to gain many pounds: but as for faith in Christ, this he never looks after. The third boasts of his faith and hope, as if he

did not doubt of his salvation, but as for the word of God, that should beget and increase it, he cares not how seldom he looks on it at home, or hears it in public. And a fourth, he hath this to say for himself: that he is a constant hearer, his seat at church is seldom empty, and at home his Bible is often in his hand, but as for prayer, his closet bears witness against him that he seldom or never performs it. This half doing will prove many a soul's undoing. Samuel asked Jesse, Are here all thy children? Though but a stripling wanting, he must be sent for before he will sit down. So I may say to some who are very busy and forward in some particular duties and means, Is here all that God has given thee in charge? If but one be wanting, God's blessing will be wanting also. And as that son was wanting of Jesse's, which God did intend to set the crown upon, so that duty and means that is most neglected we have cause to think is the means which God would especially crown with his blessing upon our faithful endeavor.' But, dear me!" she sighed, wearily, as she pushed

back the masses of golden hair from her forehead, "the whole subject is so vast, so infinitely above my power to make it plain, that I feel utterly discouraged and dissatisfied."

"Then you have no idea of what you have done, child," the invalid exclaimed. "No wonder you feel so, because from having lived long in this field of thought you have learned something of its extent. But, remember, you have brought Charles and me to the entrance, and made us eager to go on exploring. If we ever get any of this wealth, we shall have to thank you for it."

"We shall, indeed," Charles said, in a tone that showed how strongly he had been moved by the fair girl's words.

"Thank you!" she returned, simply. "It is little I have done." And with a bow and smile, she took up her hat and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE finding of Lombardo's exquisite representation of the inner man of the heart, had completely revolutionized the life of both Herr Humbert and Charles Franse.

The scientist, with the eager impetuosity so characteristic of him, plunged heart and soul into the investigation of religious truth, and Charles, as his medium of study, found himself suddenly launched upon a wide sea of theological inquiry. But his morbid shrinking was gone. Margaret seemed always to attend him, as indeed she often did in reality, and even without this subtle charm, the subject

had come to have for him an intense interest of its own.

Herr Humbert's studies were carried on in an entirely different spirit from what Charles had expected. If he challenged a statement, it was with no captious desire to prove it false. The helpless invalid was only too ready to find peace in believing, if it could be found, and as it has always been with those who bring a teachable spirit to the study of the Bible, both Herr Humbert and his assistant could at last exclaim, with the poet,—

> "This book, this holy book, on every line
> Marked with the stamp of high divinity ;
> On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
> Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
> And signature of God Almighty stamped
> From first to last, this ray of sacred light,
> This lamp from off the everlasting throne
> Mercy took down, and in the night of time
> Stood, casting on the dark his gracious bow,
> And ever more beseeching men, with tears
> And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live."

For weeks they read, for weeks they studied, and all the time a gentle woman's heart plead earnestly that God would bless them,

plead till one day Herr Humbert said, as she sat down beside him for a little chat, on her way to Fraulien Hine, "Margaret, child, you have conquered. It is all true. God has mercifully put the feet of my wicked old soul into his shoes of peace. I'm getting on the armor as fast as I can. I want to do a little fighting before I die. But, oh, child, if I had only—" He stopped abruptly, then added, "*He* has, the boy, I mean."

"Are you sure of it?" Margaret cried, with an unfeigned delight, that impressed her old friend strongly, and set him thinking.

"I'm certain of it. I *know* it, child, and it's all your doing, under God. Didn't I say you were an angel?"

Margaret was too overjoyed for words, but her heart must utter itself, and so had resource in tears. She tried her best to keep them back, but come they would, and so Charles found her, with her face hidden in her handkerchief.

Herr Humbert saw the look of pained surprise with which he regarded her. "Joy, boy, nothing but joy," he exclaimed. "I've been

telling her that she hasn't labored over us for nothing. If I'm not mistaken, she has got two as honest but as raw recruits as ever came to fight under her Captain. But we shall improve, we shall improve with her for a drill-master."

It was a very happy, rosy, tearful face that came out of the handkerchief to answer the old man, but Charles spoke first.

"If joy makes you cry, Miss Liebnitz," he said, "I'm glad you never can know the half you have done for me. God only knows into what depths of unbelief I was falling when you discovered the secret of the bronze."

"All because of my infidel books," the invalid broke in. "I thought I was doing my old friend a service when I brought his son home with me, but I came near being his ruin. And, boy, now I think of it, I'll have a bonfire of all those lying volumes. See here, Margaret," he went on, eagerly, seized with a sudden thought, "your good grandmother shall come and see 'em burnt. Tell her I'm not going to shut myself up any more. Can she come to-morrow?"

"She will be only too happy to come, whenever you say," replied Margaret, her face radiant with pleasure.

"Well, then, to-morrow. Charles will make them all ready to-day."

But the next was one of those feeble, dark days that frequently came into the invalid's calendar. Margaret said he had over-fatigued himself, and insisted on his seeing the doctor, to whom he said, when he came to the bedside, "I've found it, Doctor; that remedy you have been trying to discover for me, but it's for the soul instead of the body. Now, I don't care whether you patch me up or not."

But he was patched up, and Madam Liebnitz came to see him. She thought she was fully prepared for the change, but she could not control an involuntary start of surprise and pain at sight of him. She knew that he noticed it from the look of anguish that quivered in his face, but it soon passed, and then came an hour of genuine enjoyment. The books were burned, and when Charles came in from doing it, Herr Humbert bade him lay the Bible on his lap and place his feeble hands upon it. "By

those I have lived, by this I will die," he said, solemnly. "My lifelong mistake has been in supposing that in the study of matter and the laws that govern, I should arrive at all truth. Margaret has shown me my folly. She has opened to me that wisdom which 'was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; while as yet He had not made earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.' Now if God lets me live, I'm going, with Charles' help, to review the old studies in the light of the new. I am convinced that whatever antagonism there may seem to exist between them, lies in our imperfect knowledge of both. As each is the work of one infinite mind, they must in reality harmonize perfectly. If I can help ever so little in saving one soul from falling into the darkness that surrounded me in the days when I called myself strong in body and wise above my fellows, I'll be a happier man than I have ever been before."

"It is an object worth living for, and I trust you may have strength to accomplish it," Madam Liebnitz said, warmly, "but the task will be no easy one."

"Easy, who wants it to be easy!" exclaimed the scientist, irritably. "I've been stumbling up against obstacles all my life long, and the happiest moments I've known have been those when, after a hard fight with some knotty question, I've seen the obstinate thing obliged to yield."

"Fight away, then," Madam Liebnitz returned, laughing, as she rose to go, "and may the blessing of God attend you!"

The summer was rapidly passing, while Herr Humbert and Charles were thus absorbed in their new studies, when one day there came to them the announcement of those events at Eau Claire with which the reader is already familiar. The letter was from Allison, and contained the first intimation Franse had received of the change in his sister's health. It was carefully worded, but he instinctively felt that the worst was not told him. The fact of Mabel's marriage having occurred before her engagement had been confided to him, was, in itself, proof of some sudden change, some unexpected hurry, which he was not slow to attribute to the cause. But with his alarm and

distress there mingled an intense joy at thought of seeing Gretchen. A few weeks before he would have avoided such a meeting at all hazards. In the morbid self-absorption that then bound him, he would have thought it impossible to meet her with the frank, protecting love of other days, while he hid from her the one shadow that so darkened his whole inner life. Now, though all outward circumstances were the same, he was wholly changed. He was now in a clear atmosphere, a strong light that filled him with cheerfulness, courage and hope. Now, he felt himself strong, not in natural pride or fortitude or stoicism, but in the *Lord*. Already his soul was beginning to tread lightly over the rough places; its feet no longer bled; they were rapidly healing in the soft shoes of peace. His whole bearing was changed. It seemed as if the currents of his being, having been mysteriously chilled, were now all warmed and set again in motion. How they bounded at thought of holding Gretchen once more in his arms! Was it not a compensation for the hour when he turned away from her at Lausanne? In his delight he

almost lost sight of the reason for her coming.

Nor was Mabel forgotten. It was not his fault that they had parted coldly. He had never blamed her. She could not understand; how should she? He loved her next to Gretchen, and it gave him unmixed pleasure to think of Allison as her husband, the man of all others he most longed to see and know. Altogether, he carried a very happy face into Madam Liebnitz's parlor on the evening of the day on which the letter came, and told her of the news in the same spirit he would have gone to his mother when a boy.

"I heartily rejoice with you," she said, cordially. "I'm glad for our own sakes, too. Margaret and I both want to know your sister. Why will it not be best to bring her directly here? If she is not well, a hotel is no place for her. We are near Herr Humbert's, we have abundant room not only for her, but for the doctor and his wife beside. Many an invalid has been nursed back to health in my large south chamber."

"How kind you are!" Charles exclaimed, gratefully. "But neither Gretchen nor I would

think of giving you so much trouble."

"Put pleasure in the place of trouble, and then see about it," she returned, her beautiful face glowing with hospitality. "But never mind, now," she added, "wait till she comes."

The matter was decided before that time, however, by a telegram from Dr. Allison, sent immediately upon landing. It read thus: "If possible, secure us a private boarding-house. Gretchen much fatigued by her voyage. Shall take her by easy stages to Leipsic. Hope to be with you in a few days."

"Let this decide you," said Madam Liebnitz. "Bring her directly here, where she will be quiet and comfortable. Beside, Margaret can give her the full benefit of her care and experience."

Perhaps it is needless to add that Charles yielded. Of course he did. What man wouldn't? And if the prospect of passing long hours with his darling sister in Madam Liebnitz's south chamber was any more attractive because possibly her needs might bring another sweet face into it, who shall blame him. If, by this time, he didn't love Margaret Liebnitz,

he must certainly be very different from most young men of his age. But we will not inquire too closely. If he kisses the book or paper on which her firm, well-formed hand has rested, in the name of all that is kind let us not tell of it. If he throws himself prostrate along the stairs over which her tripping feet have passed, and lays his face upon them, let us, by all means, keep out of the way till he gets up. Love finds for itself many ways of expression, which, as such, are sacred, and woe to him who translates them into cold language, prints them in a book, and so defiles them.

But even Margaret was forgotten, when at last Charles folded Gretchen in his arms. She uttered no sound. Pale and wan she lay upon his breast, her face full of unutterable joy and love, but, alas, how changed! Franse could not hide his amazement and distress as he gazed at her.

"Yes, Charley dear," she said, at last, smiling up at him. "I don't look as I did when we parted; but never mind; now we are together perhaps I'll get stronger."

"We'd better take her to her room at once,"

Allison said. "Shall I carry you, Gretchen?"

"No, let Charley, please. I'm not too heavy, am I, darling?" and she twined her arms close about his neck, as he raised her in his strong arms.

Margaret at once led the way to the room they had prepared, cool, fragrant and shady. Charles laid his precious burden down tenderly, and then drew Mabel affectionately to him with one arm while he gave the other hand to Allison in a hearty grasp of welcome. Meantime, Margaret was busy with the invalid, and her tact and skill instantly began to reveal itself to Allison's quick observation.

"Who is this sweet girl?" he asked of Charles, in an undertone.

"Is it possible I have forgotten to introduce her!" Franse exclaimed. "Miss Margaret, forgive me. You know these friends of mine, but it seems they need to be told that you are the Miss Liebnitz of whom they have often heard through my letters. This is her grandmother's house," he went on, turning to Allison, "and when you telegraphed for private quarters, she insisted on your all coming here."

"How kind!" Gretchen murmured. "This room seems full of peace."

"I can never tell you how kind she has been to me," Charles said, turning again to his sister, but Margaret interfered.

"Dear Mrs. Blakemere, don't you think these gentlemen are very much in the way? What if we send them down stairs to see grandma?"

"Miss Liebnitz is right, Franse, we are in the way here just now," Allison said.

At this, Charles bent over his sister with the loving protection in his manner she had always known. "I shall not leave the house, darling, till I have seen you again. When you are rested, I will come back. Now go to sleep."

"Oh, Charley," she whispered, "don't ever leave me again."

"Never," he returned, pressing a lingering kiss on her lips. Then he followed Allison from the room, and Mabel closed the door after them. Had she seen the cordial grasp of their hands, the eager look in their faces the instant they found themselves alone, her astonishment would have been great, but her attention was given to aiding Margaret to undress Gretchen,

and get her comfortably settled in the delicious bed, where she soon fell asleep, utterly weary from emotion and long journeying.

"Now, Mrs. Allison, please come to your room and rest," the young hostess urged, drawing Mabel's arm within her own. "I'm sure you are very tired."

"I can't deny it," Mabel returned. "Our journey has been very fatiguing. Sometimes we have been afraid poor Gretchen would not live to get here; but now she is with Charles, I believe she will be better."

Margaret said nothing, but gathering up Mabel's hat and traveling bag, led the way into an adjoining room that opened directly from the one they first entered.

"Grandma thought you would like this because it is so convenient to Mrs. Blakemere," she said. "I will send you a luncheon, and then perhaps you will lie down until dinner-time. I will attend to Mrs. Blakemere, and Herr Franse will see after the Doctor; so for the next three hours you need have no thought for anybody but yourself." Then she gave her a kiss and went away. She found the gentle-

men slowly pacing up and down the broad path that formed the centre of a little fruit and flower garden at the back of the house. Madam Liebnitz was sitting near one of the long windows that opened upon a vine-covered porch, from which steps led down to the path.

"Maggie, dear," she said, as the girl came to her side, "these people are all very interesting. There's something amiss somewhere, and it makes itself felt in all their lives. The expression of these two faces has been a perfect study. Young Franse seems to have been through the whole range of emotion; sorrow, anger, gratitude, love, scorn, and I hardly know what beside, have chased each other across his face. Do you suppose he has been jilted by some fair American?"

At these words Margaret started as if in sudden pain. Her face crimsoned, then turned very pale; then she laughed nervously, and said, "how should I know, grandma?" then added, after a moment, "Mrs. Allison said just now he had never loved anybody as he does his sister."

"What could have made him leave her, then?" queried the stately dame, while Charles said to Allison: "How did you persuade her to come without him?"

"It was not difficult when she was coming to you," he replied. "Mr. Blakemere is changed, and I think she feels it without suspecting the cause. She has pined for you sadly."

"I didn't think that possible, while she had her husband; but what excuse did he make for not accompanying her?"

"I don't know, but my impression is the subject was not mentioned between them."

"Poor child?" Charles ejaculated, "I'm afraid she has suffered, in spite of me."

"Yes, from the separation, but now that is passed," Allison said, cheerfully.

"Of course Philip went with her to New York?"

"No, she preferred to part with him at the cottage. I begged Blakemere not to let her excite herself, and he was very calm. So was she, for that matter, but it was a calmness one is afraid of."

"Tell me the truth, Allison," Charles said, stopping short in the walk and facing his companion. "Is Gretchen in danger of her life?"

"Without great care she is, Franse," the doctor said, looking the young man frankly in the face. "But with it, she may regain a measure of health, may even have long life."

"Where is the trouble?"

"With the heart. Therefore much depends on keeping her cheerful and free from excitement."

"What has brought this upon her."

"It would be hard to answer that question, Franse," the doctor said, evasively. "No doubt many causes have united. All we can do now is to remove them as far as possible. For one thing, don't be parted from your sister if you can help it. Her life seems bound up in you."

"I was a coward to run away and leave her," Charles exclaimed, in a tone of strong self-reproach.

"Nay, nay, my dear fellow, don't blame

yourself. I don't see what else you could have done. But there are Miss Liebnitz and her magnificent grandmother by the window. Let us go in."

CHAPTER XXVII.

GRETCHEN woke from her sleep much refreshed, but the doctor would not allow her to rise, and so during the evening while Mabel went to the parlor, Charles and his twin sister sat alone together in the quiet chamber. Gretchen said little. With her eyes fastened on her brother's face, and her hand in his, her ear drank in the sound of his familiar voice, the words he spoke making but little impression on her mind, so absorbed was she in the rapture of being with him. Her peace seemed like the repose that waits upon the close of cruel torture, and from that hour she began to mend. At first her improvement was slow, but afterward

it went on with surprising rapidity. The end of the first month found her with more strength and color than had been her's for the six previous ones, and meantime she had won the love not only of Madam Liebnitz and Margaret, but of Herr Humbert also. She never tired of talking with the feeble old man about the beautiful white warrior, in which she took a keen interest, not only for its own sake, but because of its connection with the little temple at Eau Claire. She loved it also for what it had done for Charles, though she had but a faint idea of the change its discovery had wrought in him. Yet she knew that he was becoming very strong, and patient, and tender, and cheerful, that at times he was almost as merry as a child; therefore she trusted the trouble, whatever it was, had gone, and so in her trustfulness forebore all questions. How her brother blessed her for her silence!

Meantime it came about that Margaret Liebnitz saw Charles Franse in a new and most attractive light. She saw that he was no ordinary man, and she became very curious as to his past history.

It also came about that Allison and Mabel, thus relieved from their close attendance upon Gretchen, found time for that quiet enjoyment of each other's society they had so unselfishly put aside in the interest of another. Together they roamed over the quaint old city of Leipsic, till they knew it all by heart. As the invalid grew stronger, they extended their excursions in various directions, sometimes being absent for days.

Letters came constantly from Blakemere, full of love for his absent wife, but their effect upon her seemed always depressing.

Lottie wrote often, giving merry accounts of life at the cottage, and bidding Gretchen not to worry on Philip's account, as he was a much better boy when she was gone.

Still the time approached when Allison must return, and he began seriously to urge Gretchen to remain with Charles for the winter. "In the spring he will bring you home, or your husband will come for you," he said.

This plan was warmly seconded by all, especially by Charles, as he had strong reasons

for not wishing to go back to Eau Claire, yet he was determined not again to part with his sister. He was also very reluctant to leave Herr Humbert, to whose comfort he seemed indispensable.

But Gretchen's consent still lingered. "Let me think of it a little longer," she would say, and so October found them.

Allison and Mabel were to sail in the beginning of November, and there was but one more excursion to make, reserved till the last, that Gretchen and Charles might accompany them. This was to Pillnitz, in Saxon Switzerland, where the twins could visit the home to which their father and his sister Gretchen went every summer for rest and vacation.

The journey was made in a few hours, and was followed by days of quiet sight-seeing among the mountains, as Gretchen's strength would allow.

"I wish we could explore that wonderful glen called the Ottowalder Grund," Charles exclaimed, as the party sat together one evening in the gathering twilight.

"What is there to prevent, Charley?" Gretchen asked.

"I'm afraid it would be too fatiguing; it must be done on foot," he replied.

"Too fatiguing for me, you mean," she said, laughing; "but I can stay here while the rest of you go."

"O, certainly; it's no matter about your seeing the glen," he said, patting her affectionately on the cheek, "but they say it is really very wonderful. After passing through it you come out very near the verge of the Bastion, an immense precipice, from which you get the most splendid view in the whole district."

"Why couldn't we take a light litter and carry our self-sacrificing Madam on it when she was tired?" Allison suggested. "We are pretty strong and sure-footed, and she is not very heavy."

"Just the thing, doctor," Charles exclaimed; "will you trust us, sis?"

"I'm not afraid," she said, laughing, "but how cruel I should be to permit such a thing?"

"Why, it would be perfectly charming!" insisted Mabel. "Don't say a word, Gretchen; they can do it as well as not."

After a little more urging Gretchen consented, and the gentlemen went out to make the necessary arrangements for putting the plan in execution on the following day.

"Mabel," Gretchen said, when they were alone, and the shadows had deepened so their faces were hidden from each other, "I've thought of Philip continually to-day. The letter I received from him this morning has decided me to stay with Charles for the winter. He urges it strongly, and I believe, on the whole, it is best. Still, if I obeyed my impulses, I should go back with you. Life is so uncertain! so many things may happen during the long months before spring!"

"But you are so much better, dear," Mabel said, cheerfully, for there was a despondency in Gretchen's voice that disturbed her strangely.

"So I am, and Alfred thinks I will go on improving; but, after all, who can tell?"

Then Mabel heard the rustle of paper, and Gretchen slipped a letter in her hand.

"Don't think me foolish," she pleaded, "but I've carried this about with me for days. It

is for my husband. Don't give it to him unless something happens to me before we meet. If there does, I want him to have it. I didn't mean to give it to you till just before you sailed, but something impels me to do it now."

At this moment the gentlemen returned with the intelligence that all was ready for an early start in the morning, and Allison insisted that the ladies should make a long night of it in order to be thoroughly rested.

As soon as Mabel was alone with her husband she told him what had passed between Gretchen and herself. He made but little comment at first, though he listened gravely, but seeing how Mabel's fears had been roused by the incident, he said, "Don't be troubled, little wife. It's no more than natural when she thinks of staying behind, and the long winter that is to come between her and Blakemere. She will forget about it by to-morrow." So Mabel, accustomed to confide very much in her husband's judgment, was comforted, and soon fell asleep.

In the bright morning light all things looked

Among the Mountains. Page 383.

hopeful. They were early on their way, which led them through avenues of stately trees, and beside a deep glen, down which rolled a beautiful mountain stream.

After riding some distance they came to a village, where they were to leave their carriage, and pursue their way along a narrow footpath. Soon they entered the ravine, and found themselves walled in on either hand by perpendicular rocks, that rose to so great a height as almost to shut out the sun. The defile was extremely narrow, but not difficult of ascent, and by going slowly, Gretchen made her way with comparative ease, yet she was conscious of a singular oppression, whether of mind or body she could not tell, which seemed to come from the gloom and strangeness of the way. She felt as if the ponderous walls were gradually closing upon her, with a slow but inevitable approach she was utterly helpless to evade. Presently they came to a mass of rock that had fallen from above and lodged high up between the walls so as to form a natural roof, called "The Gate," under which they passed, and sat down on the other side to rest.

"What does this make you think of, Gretchen?" Charles asked, seeing her eyes wander up and down the gloomy way.

"It seems to me like some peoples' lives," she said, sadly. "They are shut in by high walls to a narrow, difficult path, where little or no sunshine ever comes."

"And some of them find the way toilsome and dreary enough, I'm afraid," said Mabel.

"Ours would be if it wasn't for the hope of that broad out-look we're coming to presently," Allison remarked.

"That is it," Charles exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "The way is easy to us because we are at peace with it, and are cheered by faith and hope in the future. How easy life seems when one is armed for it." He sprang up lightly, and assisted Gretchen to rise.

"Thank God, dear Charley, *you* are armed," she whispered. "Oh, if Philip was also!"

"He will be some day, darling. I'm sure of it," he said, cheerfully, holding her a moment in his arms, and kissing her fair brow, while the others went on their way.

Presently Allison insisted that she should be

carried on the litter, which, till now, had been useless. She laughingly consented, though declaring she was not tired, but the doctor's practised eye detected a changeful color, a peculiar light in the eye, that he did not like.

"I wish she hadn't come!" he mentally ejaculated. "The strangeness of the scenery is too exciting for her."

He continued to watch her anxiously, while he brought out the ludicrous side of everything in a way that made his wife look at him in astonishment, it was so foreign to his usual mood. Suddenly she comprehended his motive, and with ready tact lent him her aid. This new way of sight-seeing on a litter helped them wonderfully in their merry-making, and proved a less troublesome mode of travel than they expected. Still, they were not sorry when they issued from the ravine, and after a short walk deposited their burden near the verge of the great precipice, or Bastion.

"Lie still, Mrs. Blakemere," said Allison, laying his hand with professional authority on Gretchen as she was about to rise. "Let us rest a little before we look." So they all obediently sat down to breathe.

They were now on a pinnacle of rock that overhung the river Elbe, at an elevation of six hundred feet, while up and down, as far as the eye could reach, cliff after cliff rose side by side with theirs, while on the opposite bank the plain stretched far away and then gradually lifted itself into successive elevations, like the seats in some vast Coliseum. Beyond all, rose a range of lofty mountains. Here and there, upon the plain, stood giant hills, solitary and alone, like mighty gladiators waiting for the signal to begin their terrible conflict. Among them one stood high above his fellows, holding his mighty crest nine hundred feet above the river level.

The sudden transition from a dark and narrow defile to this magnificent sweep of sky above, and landscape below, could not but make a profound impression on all the party, and Allison dreaded its effect on his patient. There was a little inn near by to which he urged her to go and rest, but as it seemed full of people she objected.

"I can be far more quiet here, Alfred," she pleaded, with her winning smile, and so the doctor was overruled.

"Will the gentlemen look at the rocks a little to one side?" the guide asked. "It will not take long."

"Yes, go, I will lie here till you come back," Gretchen urged. "You, too, Mabel," she added, seeing her intention to stay behind with her. "It's your only chance, I don't need you. I'm going to sleep; you will be back in a few minutes." So, half reluctantly, Mabel followed her husband. Before passing out of sight, they all turned and kissed their hands to her; she waved hers in return, and shut her eyes in token of her determination to rest. The rocks were very wonderful, and before the trio were aware nearly an hour had been spent in their examination.

"Poor Gretchen! she will think we have deserted her," Charles exclaimed, beginning instantly to retrace his steps as fast as possible, while the others hastened after him. The moment their eyes rested on the litter they saw that it was vacant. For an instant they failed to discover its recent occupant, but Charles, whose sight was rendered keen by sudden fear, was the first to spy her as she stood

on the utmost verge of the tremendous precipice, apparently gazing down into the far depths below. He sprang forward like the wind, and as he neared her he could see that she was slowly bending, bending, more and more, as if drawn forward by an unseen hand. Allison was close upon him. "We must not startle her," he whispered, "or she will fall."

For one little moment they paused in terrible uncertainty as to their best course, and in that moment the guide had snatched a broad, long scarf from off the litter, and darting silently forward had dextrously thrown the protecting barrier before her just as, with a wild cry, Geetchen fell, not far down into the dreadful abyss, but into her brother's arms.

"Lay her on the litter, quick, Charles," Allison said, hurriedly. It was done, and in utter dismay they hung over her, while the doctor made a pretense of applying such restoratives as they had at hand. From the first, however, he felt certain of the heart-breaking truth, but he tried to hide it as long as might be from his companions, hoping so to break, at least in some degree, its crushing force.

At last Mabel cried, in a burst of agony, "O Alfred, it's of no use!"

"I'm afraid not, darling," he said, drawing her to him, while he tenderly lifted the masses of dark hair from Gretchen's pale forehead.

For a moment Charles gazed wildly from one to the other. "What do you mean?" he demanded, almost fiercely. "Gretchen has only fainted from fright."

Mabel burst into tears. "O Charles, God help you," she sobbed.

At these words the poor fellow sank down beside the lifeless body of his twin sister, and buried his face in the folds of her dress. Groan after groan escaped him, while his powerful frame quivered as if shaken by a palsy.

Allison and Mabel knelt beside him, but, alas, what consolation could they offer in a moment like this?

At last the doctor laid his hand on Franse's shoulder, saying, gently, "How shall we get her back to Pillnitz, Charles?"

"As we brought her," he replied, lifting his head and trying to speak calmly.

"Perhaps we can get some conveyance at the inn," Allison suggested.

"No, I will carry her in my arms, if you are tired."

"It's not that, my dear fellow," the doctor said; "but *you* can never bear it to take this precious burden back the way we came."

"Try me," Charles said, springing to his feet. "What is there I cannot do for *her*."

"The gentlemen forget that Otho is here to help them," the guide said, coming respectfully forward from the distance, to which he had withdrawn when the brother first comprehended the full extent of the catastrophe.

"No, we have not forgotten you, by any means, my good fellow," Allison said, taking him by the hand. "But for you, our present distress would have been heavier yet."

Charles laid his hand on Otho's arm. "God bless you, my man, God bless you, for saving her from that horrible fall!" he said, gratefully.

The German, with wet eyes, but a gratified smile, bowed reverently, in acknowledgment of their words, and then aided them to arrange Gretchen's still form on the litter, the scarf being again used to prevent her from

falling. Then covering her carefully with the shawl she no longer needed for warmth, they took up their sorrowful way into the narrow defile.

Scarcely a word was spoken till they reached their carriage, from which but a few hours since they had parted in lightsomeness of heart. Yet when they were once more seated in it, Charlès holding in his arms the precious casket in which so little ago his twin sister's soul was hidden, it seemed that years, not hours, must have rolled over them since the rising of that morning's sun.

"Alfred, tell me what made this happen?" Mabel said, after they had gone some miles on their slow way back to Pillnitz. "It is perfectly incomprehensible to me."

"To me it is perfectly plain," Allison returned. "To begin with, I have no doubt Gretchen was, from some cause, more than usually susceptible to external impressions, which accounts for her being highly excited by the unusual scenery of the Ottowalder Grund. I was uneasy about her all the way."

"Yes, dear, I noticed it," Mabel said, draw-

ing her husband's arm more closely about her. "That was the reason you made her rest before looking at the view from the Bastion."

"Yes. The transition was enough to excite the most stolid," Allison returned. "But no doubt after we left her, she became tired of lying still, and thought she would wile away the time by looking about her."

"But what could the dear child have been thinking about to stand bending over the very verge of that rock."

"Doubtless it is an instance of that strange infatuation that sometimes overtakes people of nervous temperament when looking off from great heights. I have read of it but never seen it before. It is mysterious, inexplicable, but many have been drawn by it to as terrible a fate as that from which Otho has saved our precious sister."

"But, O Alfred, why need she have died?" Mabel exclaimed, the tears bursting forth again at the thought.

"Because it was God's will, my darling," the doctor said, soothingly. "The physical cause was probably sudden fright. As the

scarf passed before her it broke the spell, her peril flashed upon her, and terror stopped the beating of her gentle, pure heart. Let us be thankful that she felt only one momentary pang. I have been afraid she would have to endure a great deal of suffering before the end came."

"Why, I thought you hoped she would recover?" Mabel said, in surprise.

"I never said so," he returned. "All I anticipated was that she might, with care, have years of comfortable health. But, Mabel," he continued, earnestly, "I can see, even in this first hour of our sorrow, that the cup is brimful of mercy, not only for Gretchen, but others, also."

Charles paid no attention to their conversation. He was wholly absorbed in caring for his dead, and in his own thoughts.

But as the longest road has an end, so had their painful ride, and they were glad indeed when Pillnitz was reached, and they at last laid all that now remained to them of Gretchen, lying peacefully in her darkened chamber.

It now remained to attend to the sad details so imperatively demanded by death, and also to inform their Leipsic friends of the sudden calamity. To their surprise and comfort, Margaret came to them next day by the earliest train, aiding them by her skill, her knowledge, and, above all, her unobtrusive sympathy, as no one else could have done. It was Margaret, who, possessed of a perfect understanding of the art, made sure that Gretchen's remains were thoroughly embalmed. With Mabel's help, she robed them in a familiar wrapper, always preferred by the wearer, because "Charley liked it," and then secured them against injury from the journey to Leipsic. In all this, her tact and energy were so entwined with the delicacy and grace of her maidenhood, that Allison was at a loss which to admire most.

"Where can we lay this precious body?" he asked her, before leaving Pillnitz. "We can't sail for home under a week or more."

"Grandma says we must bring it back to the south chamber," she answered, smiling cheerfully.

"Not really?"

"Yes, really; why not? Look at it, was anything ever more beautiful?"

And so they quietly went back to Madam Liebnitz. "Charles, my poor boy!" she said, meeting him on the threshold, with outstretched arms, as his mother would have done. Something in her tones opened the fountain of a grief that so far had been silent, finding no outward expression. With a heart-breaking sob he turned from her, and hastened to his room, where he was kindly left alone, unvexed by intrusive companionship or sympathy.

During the time that necessarily elapsed before leaving Leipsic, Gretchen lay as if in profound slumber, upon the couch beside which Charles had sat and talked with her for many happy hours. Every morning fresh flowers rested on her still breast, that rose and fell no more with the soft breath that used to come and go so gently. Seeing her there in the soft twilight of the darkened room, her pale cheek pillowed on the delicate blue of the lounge cushion, it was hard to realize that Death held her in his stern grasp.

"There beamed a smile
So fixed and holy from that marble brow,

Death gazed, and left it there ; he dared not steal
The signet-ring of Heaven."

As Madam Liebnitz hoped, her silent presence prevented Charles from feeling that sense of utter bereavement that follows the putting of the precious clay utterly out of sight.

Indeed, after a little, Franse was master of his grief, which, though intense, was undemonstrative, and he occupied himself in his final arrangements with a calm, almost cheerful energy that surprised them all. His first care was for Herr Humbert, whose first exclamation on seeing him had been :

"Oh, boy! boy! that she should be taken and *I* left! You're sore beset, but now's the time for the shield and helmet, and all the rest. God be praised that He held this trouble back till we got on our armor, and our eyes open to see where she's gone. You'll have her back again, boy, and the love you had for her is coldness compared to that which is to come. It must be so with a God to manage for us whose very name is Love."

Charles looked at the old man with mingled pity, affection and reverence, as these words

struggled forth, with even more than ordinary effort on account of his emotion, while one after another the big tears rose in the brilliant eyes, and rolled slowly over the wrinkled face; tears that the helpless hands had no power to dry.

"I believe it, dear Herr," Charles said, tenderly wiping away the signs of grief. "Just now it is my strongest consolation."

Madam Liebnitz would gladly have taken Herr Humbert to her house during Charles' absence, but he would listen to no such plan.

"No, no," he said, "it's kind of you, but it won't do. The boy promises to come back again, and, meantime, I'll live on hope, with Margaret to help me."

So Simon was selected to be his constant attendant, and Charles needed no promise from Margaret to assure him of her care.

So, at the appointed time, with hearts cast down but not destroyed, the travelers bade a sad farewell to Leipsic, and turned toward their native land, carrying their dead with them. Their voyage was prosperous, but on landing at New York Franse determined to allow the doc-

tor and Mabel to precede him to Eau Claire.

Before leaving Germany, Allison had written Blakemere that a sudden change had come over Gretchen, which made it best that she should return with them. As their reports of her had hitherto been so favorable, they dreaded the abrupt announcement of her death, and thus tried to prepare him for the worst. But skillfully as the difficult task was accomplished, poor Blakemere's first wild grief was terrible to witness.

"I've killed her!" he moaned. "My own Gretchen! My darling wife! Oh, if she had hated me, if she had scorned me! But she loved me, and I broke her heart." His haggard face, his disheveled hair, his disordered dress, as he sat bowed down upon the chair into which he sank exhausted with the first frenzy of his agony, made him seem the personification of despair. Dash stood near, his sorrowful eyes, his drooping ears, his very attitude expressive of a most profound and touching sympathy. Now and then a low, mournful wail escaped him. But Blakemere took no notice. His friends could only watch

and wait. Their gentlest words seemed only to increase his distress.

At last he seized his hat and rushed from the house, the faithful dog close at his heels. Mabel sprang after them, but Allison called her back. "Let him alone, he has gone to the woods," he said.

"But I'm afraid he will do himself some mischief," she said, excitedly.

"No, darling, Blakemere is not the man for that. He will come back quite calm, I doubt not."

Mabel was half disposed to quarrel with what she thought her husband's want of sympathy in Philip's grief; but when, after several hours, he came back not only safe, but, as Allison predicted, quiet, she was obliged to acknowledge to herself the superiority of his judgment.

Blakemere was now all eagerness for the arrival of his wife's remains. He did not seem to realize that Charles was to accompany them, though Allison distinctly spoke of them as being left in his charge. Suddenly, however, the idea became distinct in his mind, and for the time shut out every other.

"Charles Franse!" he exclaimed, vehemently. "I hate the very ground he treads on. But for him Gretchen would have loved me, and been happy. He made me what I have been. Why didn't he shoot me, stab me, anything but turn me over to the rack and then bid me 'smile and smile and be a villain!' And then, as if that were not enough, he must draw my own sweet Gretchen from me to die in *his* arms, and now *he* brings her back to me!"

These words so aggravated Allison's soul that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. "Blakemere," he said, sternly, "I know as well as you do what cause you have to bless Charles Franse. You of all men are the last to accuse him of wrong doing."

"Out of my sight, you prating fool," Blakemere cried, fiercely. "But for your abominable meddling all would have been well. It was you who persuaded my dead wife to leave me."

The two were alone together in Philip's room. An angry light flashed for a moment in Allison's eye, his hand clenched, but quickly relaxed.

"Poor fellow," he murmured, "I ought not to have said it." Then he left him without another word.

Going to Lottie, he said, "Poor Philip must take something to quiet him. He is sorely tried. I wish he could sleep. Perhaps you can persuade him to take this; he would not receive it from me." Saying which he gave her the cup, in which the soothing draught was already prepared.

She took it, and went at once to the chamber. "Dear Philip," she said, "Dash and I have come to see you a minute. The poor dog can't be easy away from you. See how he loves you," as the animal licked his hand, and rubbed his silky head against his arm. "Pat him a little just to comfort him; and take this, it will do you good."

"I don't want it," he said, moodily, pushing the cup away.

"If Gretchen were here she would make you take it," Lottie persisted, stroking his tangled hair. At this he seized the glass, and drained it at a draught.

"That's a good boy," she said. "Now lie

down on the lounge a little while, and Dash will lie in this big chair close beside you, so. Here, old fellow."

The dog obeyed, but the man sat still. "Come Philip, see Dash's eyes, how they beg."

He got up, and throwing himself on the couch began to stroke the faithful animal, who uttered suppressed sounds, half of joy, half of sorrow.

Lottie went out and shut the door. Half an hour later Allison looked in to find Blakemere in a profound slumber.

The effect of the medicine lasted for hours, during which the twins came back to the cottage, the one still, and cold, and beautiful, the other active and strong, though pale and grief-striken. So carefully had Gretchen been prepared for her last earthly journey, that when seen in the shadowy quiet of her own parlor, with the fresh flowers all about her, she looked like a sculptured emblem of peace. Mabel put in her hand the letter she had given her for her husband, perhaps with a subtle, almost unconscious foreboding of her coming fate.

"Let him find it here," she said. "It will

seem as if she spoke to him." But no eye saw the meeting. Alone Philip Blakemere went into the presence of his dead wife. When he came forth he held the letter in his hand, and his restless, uncertain eyes were red and swollen with shedding many tears.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON the morning after the funeral, Charles stood by the window of the music-room, looking sadly at the little grove by the lakelet, where he and Gretchen had played so many hours in their childish days. Mabel was beside him, with her hand upon his shoulder, and Allison sat near reading the morning paper. The two were talking of the sister they had lost.

"God bless you, Mabel, for your devotion to her," Charles said, putting his arm about her and kissing her gratefully. "Be kind to Philip, for her sake. Poor fellow! I wish he would see me before I leave."

"Perhaps he will," she said. "You are not going at present."

"Yes, Mabel, sorry as I am to part from you and the doctor, I must return to Leipsic as soon as possible. Herr Humbert needs me, and Blakemere is much better without me."

Allison looked up, and said quickly, "You are not going, Franse, till you have explained matters?"

"Yes, doctor, I believe I am," he returned, "the more I think of it, the less reason I see for disturbing them. Let Mabel understand, and as for the rest, their opinion will not affect me in Germany, you know."

"Charles Franse," the doctor exclaimed, springing to his feet, "this shall not be. With Gretchen's last breath your motive for silence passed away. If you don't clear up this matter I shall."

"Don't get excited, Alfred," Charles returned, smiling at his vehemence, "but consider how little it will cost me to continue silent when by speaking I shall so darken a reputation that has become precious to me for her sake. He certainly has enough to bear without that."

"What is it, Charles? Do tell me, Alfred,"

Mabel cried, turning quickly from one to the other.

"Tell her, Allison. I shall never forget what it cost me to go away to Europe and leave her in such perplexity and distress; but when you tell her how I was placed, she will forgive me. Now I'll go and try again if I can't persuade Philip to open his door to me."

"He is not in," Mabel said. "He went out some time ago with Dash. Why, there's old Mr. Blakemere coming up the walk," she added. "How kind of him to come and see us so soon."

"Let's see him here," Allison suggested. Charles was visibly agitated, why, Mabel did not understand, though she concluded it had to do with the mystery which had so long puzzled her, and which she had just discovered her husband could explain, though how he came to know more about it than she did was of itself a mystery. Conquering himself, Franse went forward to meet Mr. Blakemere as he entered, though the memory of their last parting after that terrible day and night at the bank, came back to him so vividly that he could scarcely

stand. To his amazement the old man seized his hands, exclaiming,—

"God bless you, my boy! How could I have believed you took it! But oh, to think my own nephew was the guilty one! I never would have believed it of him if he hadn't told me himself." Then the trembling figure sank down on the seat Allison placed for it.

Mabel saw the look of intense satisfaction that came into her husband's face. "This is as it should be!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Blakemere, Philip has done the right thing at last. Let this tell in his favor. Beside, Conrad Werner, who told me the whole story the night he died, said that Philip was less to blame than he was."

"That couldn't be," Mr. Blakemere returned, "for he was merely a subordinate."

"Very true; but he led Philip into speculations where they both became involved, and it was at his suggestion that they made use of the bank money, hoping to return it before they were discovered. This they would have done if the company had not failed, a calamity that did not occur until after Philip's marriage.

When the crash came Werner fled, leaving your nephew to face the trouble alone, which, as Charles was temporarily in his place, resulted in his taking the whole thing on his own shoulders, disgrace and all, to save *Gretchen's* husband."

"Charles, is this true?" Mabel asked, turning toward him a face pale with excitement.

"I can't contradict it," he answered. "Now you see that to have confided the trouble even to you, was impossible, without betraying Philip."

"But how did you make Mr. Blakemere think you did it?"

"I'll tell you how he did it," the old gentleman exclaimed. "He called us all together, myself and the directors, and said as he could hide the thing no longer, he thought best to confess that in an emergency money had been taken in the expectation of returning it, but the venture having failed, he could only replace it in part. I was so astounded I could scarcely believe my ears. I asked him why he hadn't told me he needed money; didn't he know I would have been glad to help him? He put his head down, and his face was as white as your dress."

"Don't press me, Mr. Blakemere," he said. "The wrong has been very great, but so is the punishment."

"There wasn't one of us but pitied him profoundly, and instead of making the thing public we decided to hush it up among ourselves. The poor fellow had always been so honest and faithful, we wanted to give him another chance. Just think of it! that was the way we talked about Charles Franse, thinking, all the time, how magnanimous we were. Of course we couldn't keep him in the bank, so at his request we let him go after Philip. But he never seemed the same after his return, and the whole thing has been unaccountable to me till this morning, when in he comes in a sort of frenzy, says he'll bear it no longer, that Franse has ruined him, and ever so much beside, and finally ends by telling the story of his and Werner's doings. The minute I got hold of it I came right away here to beg Charles' pardon for not having known better than to believe it of him, even when he said it of himself. We must have you back in the bank, Charles," he went on. "There's nobody now but you that can manage our matters."

"By no means, Mr. Blakemere; you must let Philip remain where he is," Franse replied.

Mr. Blakemere looked at him a moment in silence, and then exclaimed,—

"Why, man, you are insane!"

"No, sir, I'm not; but hasn't he been faithful since he came back?"

"Yes, so far as I know; but what of that?"

"Only this; that he will remain so. What he has suffered can be known by his making a voluntary confession as soon as possible after the sad events of last week. I did not intend to expose him, and he knew it. I shall return to Germany immediately, but I ask it as a personal favor that nothing more be said about this unfortunate affair. Let Philip retain his place. Let his good name be preserved for sake of her who bore it, and who loved him with the whole strength of her pure heart. It is enough for me that, in the minds of yourself and the directors, I shall henceforth be acquitted of dishonesty." So saying, he bowed, and stepping through the open window walked rapidly toward the grove.

"Charles is right, Mr. Blakemere," the

doctor said. "Let us bury the past in Gretchen's grave. Perhaps this may open a brighter, better future before Philip."

"We'll see what can be done," he replied, getting up to go home. "Of course I must inform the directors, and I hardly think they will consent to his remaining. God knows I don't want to be hard on the poor fellow."

Franse was present at the meeting of the officers of the bank, and through his persuasions they consented to retain Philip Blakemere as cashier, and Charles left their presence with the load of disgrace and mystery he had so long borne utterly lifted from his spirit.

A card appeared next day, signed by the president and directors of the bank, stating that some unexplained transactions, tending to throw suspicion on the honorable character of Charles Franse, having been unexpectedly cleared up, they desire to give public expression to their entire confidence in him as a gentleman and especially to bear testimony to his faithfulness while acting as cashier of the bank of Blakemere & Co.

The gossips of the town being thus dislodged

from their surmises regarding Franse, turned their fire against Blakemere, but here they were met with the stubborn fact that he was still continued in his very responsible position at the bank; so they were sorely perplexed, and at last determined to rest the whole blame upon the memory of Conrad Werner.

Before leaving for Germany, Franse received through Mr. Blakemere his sister's entire property, in place of his own fortune, every dollar of which he had given to the bank, to in part make good what had been stolen.

He accepted it without hesitation as a return which was not only his due, but which he had no right to refuse at Philip's hands.

He said as much in the letter he wrote him the night before he left.

He told him what Gretchen had said when he raised her to her feet on their way up the glen, and entreated him to remember her as a lure to all that was noble in the future. Above all, he besought him to strive for those higher victories which are only possible to those who have the armor on. His closing words were, "make haste to get it, my brother, that together

we may fight our way to where she waits to welcome us."

And now, dear reader, the future of those whose life we have so far traced seems plain before them.

Blakemere will in future make his home with his uncle. As baby Jennie has considerately resigned her title to Sir Dash, in favor of "Poor unky Pillet," he will go with him, for neither dog or man could endure a separation.

Granger will hasten to claim his treasures and bear them away to the far west, accompanied by aunt Hannah, who is regarded by the maimed but happy baby as her own especial lump of darkness, which, in reality, is no darkness at all, but light instead.

Charles, once more a free man, will return, not wholly sad, to the land where his duty and perhaps his pleasure now chiefly lie. Gretchen has been taken, but while Margaret remains, the future holds for him a hope that shines in spite of sorrow.

Allison and Mabel will dwell together in the cottage, loving and beloved, waiting for the time when, perhaps, Herr Humbert and the

stately Madam Leibnitz having gone beyond their filial care, Charles and Margaret will come and make their home in the old familiar place.

Perhaps sweet girls and merry boys may yet frolic by the lakelet, or hush their laughter while in Aunt Gretchen's room their parents show them, standing side by side, Lombardo's temple and Antonio's bronze, teaching them how to build for heaven, and secure the armor needful for the conflict of life.

And so we leave them, trusting that as one by one they gather in the house not made with hands, our gentle Gretchen, ever watching through the open door, may see her husband coming, clad in that armor she so longed to see him wear.

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